

TALLEYDALE MINE - SNOW HILL COAL CORP.

Talleydale Mine  
Closes Saturday

Mines & Mining

The Snow Hill Coal Corporation has announced the closing of the Talleydale Mine, effective June 27. The mine has been operated by Snow Hill since Oct. 1, 1934.

In an announcement to employees of the mine, the Snow Hill Coal Corporation management thanked the employees for their co-operation and offered to "help in your transition period to other employment." The bulletin also stated that recovery work will begin as soon as possible.

The Talleydale mine surface was purchased by Snow Hill in 1934 from the Talley Coal Company. The Talley Company had mined the No. 4 vein until exhausted. After Snow Hill assumed operation, the Clovelly Coal Company worked the No. 5 seam, and the No. 6 seam, which was at ground level, was operated by a number of smaller companies.

At the time of the closing of the mine, No. 3 seam has been producing 2,100 tons daily and 443,000 tons yearly. The No. 3 seam is 341 feet underground and is from five to six and one-half feet thick.

There are 171 persons on the payroll with Frank Ralston as superintendent.

With the closing of Talleydale, there are only eight shaft mines left in operation in Indiana.

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# State plans to reclaim abandoned mine sites

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JAN 24 1986 TS

MINES + MINING - END

Five abandoned mines in northwest Vigo County soon will be eliminated as public and environmental hazards.

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources will accept bids for reclaiming the sites until Thursday, said Tom Thomas, head of field operations for the Division of Reclamation in Jasonville.

The sites make up a 4-square-mile area on private land in Fayette Township between New Goshen and Tecumseh. The sites contain remnants of unreclaimed underground operations including open shafts, dilapidated structures and refuse material, Thomas said.

"These old mine shafts are cer-

tainly a danger. Another problem is the growing collection of trash and junked cars and appliances there," he added.

The trash would be removed and structures razed for filling open shafts. Grading and revegetation work would complete the project.

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# National Union, U. S. Officials to Take Part In Inquiry; Disaster

## 4th Worst in History

MARCH 4-1961 STAR

Investigation of the explosion Thursday night at Viking Mine which snuffed out the lives of 22 men will begin at 8:30 o'clock this morning. All possibilities of the cause of the explosion will be investigated.

Bodies of the men were recovered in one of the fastest operations ever conducted at a disaster of this size, it was stated by officials at the scene.

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THE LAST of the 22 bodies was brought to the surface at 7:35 o'clock yesterday morning, exactly 12 hours to the minute from the time of the explosion as determined by charts on two fans operating at the mine. It was only 6½ hours after the blast

## Official Will Study Survivors' Welfare

All of the men killed Thursday night in the explosion at the Viking Mine were survived by widows. In addition, there were 30 other dependents, it was reported.

Harmon Kelly Jr., of the Miners' Welfare Fund, formerly of Sullivan, arrived yesterday from Washington, D. C., to look into the matter of welfare.

Kelly is familiar with the local mining situation in that he is the son of a former international board member of District 11, Mine Workers of America. Harmon Kelly Sr., who served in that capacity for 10 years. The family lived at Sullivan.

until the first two bodies were recovered and all were recovered within a period of 5½ hours after that.

Last inspection of the mine by state authorities was only 22 days preceding the explosion, on Feb. 8. Last inspection by federal mine inspectors was in December. All faults found were corrected following inspections, they added.

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HEADING today's investigation will be James Westfield, assistant director of the United States Bureau of Mines, and Charles Ferguson, national director of safety for the United Mine Workers of America. They flew here

HEADING today's investigation will be James Westfield, assistant director of the United States Bureau of Mines, and Charles Ferguson, national director of safety for the United Mine Workers of America. They flew here from their headquarters in Washington, D. C. early yesterday morning.

Also in the group will be inspectors of the Indiana Bureau of Mines and Mining, headed by Charles Purcell, director, and Hobart Butler, state labor com-

See EXPLOSION  
On Page 11, Column 4

## Explosion

Continued From Page 1

missioner; inspectors for the Lynch Coal Operators' Reciprocal Association; Federal mine inspectors from the office at Vincennes; members of the executive board of District 11, U. M. W. A.; insurance representatives; members of the Viking Mine Safety Committee, and company officials, including Birch Brooks, vice president and general manager of the Viking Coal Corporation, which operates the mine, and Colvin Burk, general superintendent of the mine.

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THE MINE has been closed pending the inspection and repair. Company officials said last night they expect it will be down about a week.

The material loss is slight in comparison to the uncomparable loss of life, it was pointed out, and in comparison to what might be expected from an explosion of such magnitude.

Toll of the disaster places it as the fourth worst in the history of Hoosier coal mining. The worst was that of the City Mine in Sullivan, Feb. 20, 1925, when 54 men were killed. Thirty-six died at the Francisco Mine in Gibson County on Dec. 9, 1926. There were 29 men killed at the Little Betty Mine near Linton Jan. 29, 1931.

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LAST LOCAL disaster taking a large toll was April 30, 1947, when eight men died in an explosion at the Spring Hill Mine. Last one in the state was in 1948 at Princeton, when 12 miners died at the King Station Mine.

First indication of the explosion was shown on the chart of the fan nearest the explosion area. It showed a drastic pressure increase at 7:35 o'clock. At the same time the chart on the fan at the main entry showed a small jump. The mine has an audible system indicating when the fans fail. However, the fans did not fail and there was no further warning of trouble until no coal came out of the area. The top boss called in and received no answer.

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IMMEDIATELY there was an alert of trouble and the 22 men in the other part of the mine were notified to come out and help was requested in the way of mine safety crews.

It is probable that all were killed instantly, company officials said last night. However, R. E. Hudson, state safety inspector, reported that it looked as if some men had tried to crawl away and didn't get very far.

All were found within a small area that included the two "Colmol" (continuous miner) sections. This included one main entry development and one room development in the newest area being developed.

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Viking Mine  
Explosion

**THE EXPLOSION** was at a depth of about 265 feet. The area was about a half mile north of the Coal Creek Hill and on the left side of U. S. Highway 150. Viking Mine, a slope mine in the fifth vein, was developed immediately after World War II to serve the Wabash Power Station of Public Service Company. It is about eight miles northwest of the city close to the Wabash River. All of its coal is used by the power station.

However, the disaster will not affect the electric output, it was pointed out, as Green Valley Mine, which supplies part of the coal, will be supplying all until Viking is back in operation.

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**FORCE** of the explosion possibly caused by a cutting machine hitting a gas pocket, and the resulting coal dust fire, that was short-lived but intense, resulted in the charring and mangling of bodies so that all had to be identified by their belt numbers, with the exception of one.

When the last identification had been completed, Brooks stood near the mine entry and wept. "We have lost 22 good men," he said. "We don't know what caused the explosion but we plan to begin an investigation to find out. The plant will be closed until the investigation is over." He had made his first public statement only moments after the first two bodies were brought. At that time he would make no identification of any man lost until after all bodies had been retrieved from their grimy death chambers.

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**COMPARATIVELY** little debris was noted by Hudson. Mine cars were knocked off the track and the blast disabled the huge conveyor belt used to carry coal out of the plant.

Both the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army established canteens at the scene, serving gallon upon gallon of coffee and hundreds of sandwiches and doughnuts.

Also present were representatives of Civil Defense, the entire sheriff's corps, almost all of the state troopers assigned locally and others, and city police.



# Victims Trapped And Die in Tracks Following Blast

By JOHN POTISEK *inf m 3-1961*

The last of 22 miners whose lives were snuffed out in a single instant Thursday night at the Viking Coal Co. mine near here was brought to the surface at 7:45 a.m. Friday.

There was a violent explosion sometime last night about two and a half miles from the main shaft along the maze of entries and tunnels of the vast operation.

The exact time of the blast was unknown. Some think it happened as early as 7:45 p.m. when an air pressure

(Page of Mine Disaster Pictures on Page 8).

gauge on the surface dropped to zero. An official attempted to telephone the miners and got no response to his repeated rings.

The disaster ranks as the second worst in Indiana mining history. It is only surpassed by the 1925 explosion in a Sullivan county mine, where 56 miners met death.

The last body was returned to the surface about four and a half hours after the initial victim was found. A

morgue was set up at the Bedino Chapel of the Valley where the bodies were taken in either Bedino or Frank M. Patrick J. Ryan ambulances. By midmorning Friday, all the bodies had been taken to other funeral homes, except two which will remain there for final rites.

The explosion apparently killed the men in their tracks, according to rescuers.

"They fell where they were working at the time of the explosion, said R. E. Hudson of Rosedale, a state mine inspector who joined the rescue crews.

"Only a couple tried to crawl," Hudson said.

## 22 Are Unhurt.

Only one body could be recognized by the features. The other charred and mangled bodies were identified by the belt numbers.

Twenty-two other miners working in another section were unharmed and ordered to the surface immediately.

Initial reconstruction of the explosion places the point of the blast about two and a half miles down an entry headed northwest of the shaft. The shock wave apparently traveled to the end of the entry and echoed back to within a half mile of the shaft. There was a flash fire, but moments after the blast there was no fire.

The explosion unloosed tons of coal and earth, knocked concrete and wooden ventilators, and twisted metal machinery.

However, there were few physical barriers to keep rescue men away from the death scene. Their problem was the gas and dust. Both posed the threat of a new explosion.

"You couldn't see anything in there. The smoke was black as night," a rescue worker said.

## All Hope Abandoned.

It wasn't long before any "real hope" of finding anyone alive was abandoned. Then came the long wait for the final word.

"It was a horrible, horrible thing," said Vigo Coroner Dr. D. M. Ferguson, who was on the scene most of the night.

"It appeared to be a heavy flash fire, a bombardment-type thing so intense and rapid they had no time to do anything," Dr. Ferguson, said.

The faces and hair were singed on all the victims, Ferguson said, from a tremendous concussion. It was unlike the burns a person would suffer under prolonged burning, he added.

Wallace Rippey, 58, Terre Haute, one of those killed probably was leading the men, the coroner said. In his pockets were maps, a ball of cord and a notebook which showed the location of the men.

"Were there any scribbles he may have jotted down at the last moment?" the coroner was asked.

"There wouldn't have been time," he replied.

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The scene was illuminated by two or three spotlights and some 200 persons stood in the dark and cold outside the rope barrier manned by Indiana State Police.

They stood staring at the mine shaft, seeing nothing and finding no words to speak. They just showed a daze of horror.

The story of what happened in that entry last night is yet to unfold.

#### Plan Investigation.

Birch Brooks, vice president and general manager, issued a statement Friday morning that an investigation would start immediately. He said:

"An investigation will be held Saturday morning at the mine starting at 8:30 o'clock by James Westfield, assistant director of the Federal Bureau of Mines, and Charles Purcell, State Director of Mines. Others to take part include Charles Ferguson, safety director of the United Mine Workers of America, insurance personnel, and company officials."

Westfield and UMW's Ferguson arrived here at 6 a.m. in preparation for the investigation.

Meanwhile, in Washington, D. C., Bureau of Mines Director Marling J. Ankeny said the mine had been inspected by bureau officials last December. He said all "disaster hazards discovered had been corrected by the time the inspection was completed."

The mine in question was a "gassy mine," which Ankeny said required three inspections a year. He explained that most big mines are "gassy" and certain special precautions are necessary.

Brooks statement expressed gratitude to all those that helped in the rescue operation, state police, the sheriff's department, the Vigo Civil Defense units, and the Red Cross and the Salvation Army whose representatives were on the scene all night.

The mine will remain closed until after the investigation, according to Brooks. The investigation is expected to last several days. Hopes are the mine will be back in operation in a week or ten days.

The men, who made up half of the shift at the time of the explosion, were assigned to two loading machines deep in the mine.

"We lost 22 fine men," Brooks said.

#### No Fault with Shaft.

Homer Parks of West Terre Haute, a day-shift miner, said, "I don't think there could have been anything wrong with the shaft they were in. They must have hit an old shaft which had gas formed in it. They used to mine other shafts here years ago." Company officials privately agreed with his theory.

Parks had rushed from home to help in the rescue effort.

"I know every man down there," he said. "My neighbor across the street is one of them. They're all family men. It's really going to be tough."

Clyde Weaver of Brazil, an electrician, was with the crew that escaped the blast.

"We didn't even know what happened," Weaver said. "I didn't hear a thing. They called down and told us to get out but gave us no indication that anything was wrong. We hurried out as quick as possible."

#### Generated Terrific Heat.

The heat generated by the blast was so intense it melted plastic insulation on trolley wires a mile from the center of the affected area. Heat and gas drove back the first rescue crews to enter the dust-and-smoke-filled tunnels.

They donned gas masks and s

soon recovered two bodies. State Police Cpt. Rufus Finney repeated flatly that "all 22 miners are dead" and Brooks repeated there was little chance anyone was alive.

But rescue workers continued their fight against deadly carbon monoxide gas and the threat of new rock falls to find the missing.

#### Rescue Teams on Job.

Six full time rescue crews, including several Green Valley Mine employes and also some from Bicknell from the Lynch Reciprocal Coal Operators Association disaster crew, were working on a rotating basis battling intense smoke in an effort to reach the other trapped men.

Two carloads of rock dust were brought in to spread over the area to prevent another explosion.

The Viking Mine was not considered a dangerous one from standpoint of gas. Precautions were taken to minimize the dust hazard. It had established a record of no fatalities between 1947 and 1957, and there had been only one fatality in the mine's history.

It has a labyrinth of tunnels for miles beneath the surface of the county. In all, it employes 220 miners.

The mine is in operation around the clock to supply fuel for the nearby Wabash power plant of the Public Service Co. of Indiana.

Mine disasters have claimed more than 1,800 lives in Indiana since 1888.

The worst Hoosier mine disaster on record occurred on Feb. 20, 1925, with 56 persons killed in the City Coal Co. mine near Sullivan.

Other major ones before the explosion in which 22 men were killed near Terre Haute Friday night—and their death tolls—were:

April 30, 1947 — Spring Hill Mine, Terre Haute, 8.

May 22, 1941 — Panhandle Mine, near Bicknell, 14.

July 15, 1937 — Baker Mine, northeast of Sullivan, 20.

Jan. 29, 1931 — Little Betty Mine, Sullivan County, 29.

December 9, 1926 — Francisco Mine, Gibson County, 37.



Dust Was Terrible

MARCH 3, 1967

TRIB.

# Victim's Brother On Rescue Team

**EDITOR'S NOTE**—Miner John Sangenetti, 41, was at work in the Viking mine when an explosion in another part of the mine sealed off his brother, Joe, 44, and 21 other miners. John was among the first persons to re-enter the mine with rescue crews. Here is his story.

By JOHN SANGENETTI

As Told to United Press International

I was working about three miles from the explosion and I didn't know what had happened until I came up.

I went straight back down with a probing crew. The dust and smoke were so bad you couldn't breathe.

To get to the men you had to push air in front of you. First you rig up ventilators—the other ones were knocked out in the explosion—and then you push air and gas in front of you, like a horseshoe so it circles around and out.

It looked like a tomb. Everything was charred and black and covered with coal dust. The explosion was so strong it knocked out cement and wooden ventilators. It knocked coal moles and shuttle cars and roof support drills all over the place.

A mile away the heat melted one-eighth inch plastic insulation on a trolley wire.

The explosion covered about a quarter of a mile, from the center to its edges. Just gas wouldn't have been so wide. But it kicked

Continued On Page 9, Column 5.

# Brother with Rescue Team

Continued From Page One.

up coal dust, and it spreads like wild fire.

We went as far as we could. We found two bbdies and then we had to come up because of the gas.

I came here to work in 1954. Joe and his wife and three kids were here 10 years. He was a jerryman, an assistant laborer.

It was quiet as a grave in there. I know he is dead. Nobody stood a chance, the blast was so terrific.

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# Investigation of Explosion At Viking Killing 22 Men To Get Under Way Today

*See March 4-1961*

## Answers to Questions Awaited By Mourners

What caused Thursday night's ghastly mine explosion which snuffed out the productive lives of 22 workers? Did the men deep underground have any advance warning of the impending disaster? Were they aware of the tomb of death which surrounded them?

These questions and many others remained unanswered yesterday as teams of safety officials prepared to subject the bleak cavern to a complete formal inspection this morning.

**PROBABLY** the most tragic scene of the entire calamity was the gruesome task of attempting to identify the mutilated bodies arranged on two rows of white and green sheets at Bedino Chapel of the Valley in West Terre Haute.

Wives of families shrieked as they looked upon the lifeless forms of their loved ones. Many of the relatives clung desperately to dimmed hopes that their people would not be among the score and two who were brought to the chapel by the ominous ambulances shuttling back and forth from the mine.

**ALL THROUGH** the long ordeal at the mine ears perked up as the grim buzzer announcing the arrival of a coal car containing a body broke the eerie silence along the Wabash River bank. Eyes glanced hopefully toward the mine shaft as the clang of the car was heard indicating it was approaching the surface.

See **AGONIZING HOURS**  
On Page 2, Column 1

## Agonizing Hours

Continued From Page 1

Women screamed. Children cried, "Daddy."

Relatives — wives, children, fathers and mothers — peered through the dark opening as a form covered with a dull yellow burlap blanket came into view as the name of the dead man was called out, one family departed in agony.

**THE OTHERS** returned to the concrete engine house 25 yards from the mine entrance to await the next buzzer.

Thus the relatives of 22 miners spent more than eight agonizing hours early yesterday morning while emergency rescue crews probed the depths of the Viking Coal Mine near West Terre Haute searching for the bodies that fell almost instantly when "that green devil mixed with the coal dust."

Lyton Mose Fisher, 46 years old, of Clinton, looked at the mine entry and slowly ambled away. "If I'd worked," he said, "I'd be dead. They've already found the men where I'd have been working."

**FISHER TOLD** reporters he didn't work Thursday night because he had a cold and the doctor had ordered him to rest for a week.

Other miners missed the explosion by some strange quirk of fate.

Norman Price of West Terre Haute was sent to the other side of the mine shortly before the blast. He escaped with 22 others.

Another man who would have been working Thursday night was Robert Forbes, 39, of Shelburn. But his wife convinced him that he should take the night off and accompany her and the couple's son to Indianapolis where the youth was embarking on a hitch in the Air Force.

**OTHERS WEREN'T** so fortunate. Jack Gummere, 31, of 1533 South Eighth Street, died because he worked a shift for a miner who failed to report for duty. Gummere ordinarily worked the third trick beginning at midnight. He was called to work the second shift and was on duty when the blast occurred.

Also killed was Gummere's father, Chester Burl Gummere, 53, of 1115 Mary Lane.

Another victim was Claude Parker of R. R. 7. The 44-year-old man was a brother-in-law of State Trooper Jay Dennis who was called to the scene to aid in rescue efforts.

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**BILL NORTON** and Ray Stout, members of the rescue team, discovered the bodies of their sons, James L. Norton, 28, of R. R. 1, West Terre Haute, and Roy Stout, 37, of Shelburn. The fathers went off duty immediately after identifying their sons.

John Sanquenet, 41, of R. R. 2, Clinton, was at work in another part of the mine when the explosion seceded off his brother, Joseph, 45, of R. R. 1, Rosedale. The younger Sanquenet was on the rescue squad.

David C. Hale, 40, of R. R. 2, Linton, one of the dead men, was the son of Ott Hale of Linton who was killed 30 years ago in an explosion which took the lives of 28 other miners in the Little Betty disaster near Linton.

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**AS RELATIVES** were notified of their loss, activity began in the wash room where all the miners' clothes were hanging from the ceiling on chains. It was a sad job claiming the garments.

"Oh, if they only could bring them out alive," a middle-aged woman cried as rescuers returned with the bodies. "This was supposed to be a gasless mine. How did it happen?"

A little red-haired boy -- no more than 12 years old -- moaned for his father as he was embraced by a teen-aged girl. Her father was down there too.

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**ANOTHER CABLE** car reached the top. A deputy came over and said, "It's Jack."

"Oh, no. It can't be Jack," screams a sister. A short time later her father was brought out of the mine. She was helped away by police officers. Others made the long walk back to the engine house.

A reporter went to the engine house to call in the story. A wife got hysterical when he described the scene. The receiver was placed back on the hook without any explanation.

Soon the sun was shining and the next to last cable car was coming out of the shaft. The little redhead clutched his mother's hand and this time he didn't cry. "Daddy," as a deputy sheriff approached. He already knew so he turned and walked toward a car.

Suddenly the last car surfaced. The identification of the body took just a few seconds. Now it was time to go home.

## *Star Mar 4-1961* **Blast Dead**

**CLARENCE CHUBB**, 37, Hymera.

**ROBERT DAVIS**, 27, 3122 North Twenty-third Street, Terre Haute.

**CHESTER GARDNER**, 34, Fontanet.

**WILLIAM GATTI**, 37, 2901 Lafayette Avenue, Terre Haute.

**BURL GUMMERE**, 53, 1115 Mary Lane, Terre Haute.

**JACK GUMMERE**, 31, 1533 South Eighth Street, Terre Haute.

**THOMAS GURCHIEK**, 52, 1803 Margaret Avenue, Terre Haute.

**DAVID C. HALE**, 50, R. R. 2, Linton.

**GEORGE HILL, JR.**, 54, 578 South Court Street, Sullivan.

**MAX M'GAUGHY**, 34, 3235 North Fifteenth Street, Terre Haute.

**JAMES L. NORTON**, 28, R. R. 1, West Terre Haute.

**CLAUDE PARKER**, 44, R. R. 7, Terre Haute.

**AMIL PETIT**, 34, R. R. 1, Shelburn.

**ELMO RANARD**, 54, Dugger.

**JOHN M. RANDALL**, 62, R. R. 1, Rosedale.

**WALLACE RIPPY**, 58, 432 Second Avenue, Terre Haute.

**JOSEPH SANQUENETTI**, 45, R. R. 1, Rosedale.

**WILLIAM SCOTT**, 56, 2101 Spang Avenue, Terre Haute.

**GEORGE S. SMITH**, 59, R. R. 1, Clinton.

**ROY STOUT**, 126 South State Street, Shelburn.

**JOHN STULTZ**, 49, 225 North Main Street, Sullivan.

**JAMES TURLEY**, 55, R. R. 1, Farmersburg.





**WOEFUL WAITING** — Darkness only added to the woe of the relatives of the 22 men killed Thursday night in an explosion at the Viking Mine eight miles northwest of the city. Miners' wives and other relatives seemed almost helpless in their attempts to comfort the grieving colleagues as shown above.

*Star Nov 4-1961*





**MISSION COMPLETED** — Rescue team workers are shown lifting the last of the bodies of the 22 men killed Thursday night in an explosion at the Viking Mine from the coal car in which it was brought out. The last body was surfaced at 7:35 o'clock yesterday morning, exactly 12 hours after the blast occurred about 2½ miles from the main entrance to the mine.



# Mine Investigators *Feb. 6-1967* Hunt Gas Pockets

The maze of worked out rooms and entries at the Viking Coal Mine, where 22 miners died in a gas and dust explosion last Thursday night, were under exploration by mining safety experts Monday, seeking the source of the disastrous gas accumulation.

Charles Ferguson, assistant safety director of the United Mine Workers of America, said the investigation, begun last Saturday, "will continue until we determine the cause."

Saturday's investigation in the explosion area failed to reveal answers to how the gas accumulated in the area and why it was not discovered sooner, Ferguson advised.

## Set Hearing Thursday.

A formal hearing has been set for 9:30 a.m. Thursday, called by Charles Purcell, director of the Indiana Bureau of Mines and Mining, according to Ferguson.

Place of the hearing has not been disclosed. However, Ferguson said "it will be here in Terre Haute" and will deal with questioning of company and union representatives and others.

Early Monday, Ferguson said a small group of investigators were preparing to re-enter the depths of the slope mine which extracts coal from the fifth vein for use in the nearby power generating station of the Public Service Company of Indiana's Wabash River Station.

Ferguson said the mine, located on the west bank of the Wabash River, about two miles east of U. S. Highway 150 and about eight miles north of West Terre Haute, contains a number of worked out rooms and entries

Continued on Page 11, Column 4.

on the level in which the 22 victims were working.

## Visit Worked Out Areas.

It is these areas, he said, that the investigators planned to explore today in hopes of finding the answer to how the deadly methane gas accumulated undetected. It is theorized that the explosion occurred when the continuous loader, on which one unit of the victims were working, cut through the coal face into the gas-filled pocket.

Origination of the gas was viewed by Ferguson as a focal point in the investigation since "this didn't happen in 15 minutes" but must have been in the area for some time.

Force of the blast covered a 2,000-foot area. At no time was the mine's general ventilation system halted completely, officials pointed out.

Sunday, the investigators reportedly sealed off various sections of the mine and then opened doors to see if methane gas would accumulate.

## Gas Fails to Develop.

They reported the experiment negative, adding: "If it (the gas) were present, it would have been

noticeable in 30 minutes. The doors were open nearly one and one-half hours.

In the party of investigators are Ferguson and Purcell; James Westfield, assistant director of the United States Bureau of Mines; company and insurance officials, and other safety experts.

Westfield reportedly expressed the opinion that most of the facts should be in the hands of the investigation team by Thursday's formal hearing. He noted that sworn statements of mine workers and company officials should round out the investigation.

According to Ferguson, the gas accumulation is a perplexing mystery since mine records show no appreciable amount of gas in the mine for the past six months.

Expressions of concern from noted personalities include that of 82-year-old John L. Lewis, former UMWA president, who retired in January of 1960 and was replaced by then Vice President Thomas Kennedy. Lewis reportedly has been in close contact with the local inspection team.

## Hold Funeral Rites

Meanwhile, funeral services and burial of the 22 miners continued, one of them a dual service for a father and son.

Sunday services included those of Elmo F. Ranard, 53, and David C. Hale, 40, both at Dugger; Clarence E. Chubb, 37, and Amil R. Petit, 34, both at Hymera; Roy Leon Stout, 37, at Shelburn; George Hill Jr., 53, at Sullivan; James Turley, 55, at Farmersburg, and George S. Smith, 54, at Clinton.

Services for the remaining 14 victims were scheduled for Monday and Tuesday—10 of them Monday and four Tuesday.

The Monday services are as follows: Wallace Rippey, 58, of 1116 South Fourth street, 10:30 a.m. from the Bedino Chapel of the Valley; Robert L. Davis, 27, 3122 North Twenty-third street, 11 a.m. from the Thomas Funeral Home; and John Martin Randall, 63, of RR 1, Rosedale, 10 a.m. at Clinton.

Also, William C. Scott, 56, of 2101 Spang avenue, 1 p.m. from the Thomas Funeral Home; Chester D. Gardner, 34, 1 p.m. at Fontanet; James L. Norton, 28, of RR 1, West Terre Haute, 1 p.m. from the Bedino Chapel; John Eli Stultz, 49, 2 p.m. at Sullivan, and Joseph C. Sanquenet Sr., 45, 1:30 p.m. at Clinton.

Tuesday services will include those for Claude W. Parker, 44, of RR 7, 10 a.m.; William Gatti, 37, of 2901 Lafayette avenue, 1 p.m., and Max E. McGaughy, 33, of 3235 North Fifteenth street, 3 p.m., all from the Thomas Funeral Home, and Thomas Gurchick, 52, of 1803 Margaret avenue, 10 a.m. from the Callahan Funeral Home.

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TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

## Legislators Mourn Viking Mine's Dead

STAR MARCH 4, 1961

INDIANAPOLIS, March 3. —

(AP)—The Indiana House of Representatives passed a resolution of mourning today for the 22 miners killed in the explosion near Terre Haute Thursday night.

The resolution, adopted by voice vote, was sponsored by the three Terre Haute House members — Democratic Representatives Birch E. Bayh, Jr. and Jack I. Neaderhiser and Republican John D. Ennis.

After passage of the resolution, the House observed a moment of silence in memory of the dead miners and sent the resolution over to the Senate.

During the day President Kennedy's sympathy was extended to families of the 22 men. Governor Matthew E. Welsh sent telegrams expressing both his and the President's sympathy after a telephone call from the White House.

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# Investigators Fail to Find Source Of Gas in Viking Mine Explosion

Star Mar 6 - 1961

Federal and state mine safety officials reported some progress last night following the second day of investigations to determine the source of deadly methane gas which seeped into the Viking Coal Mine Thursday night setting off an explosion that killed 22 miners.

But the primary question remained unanswered—how did the gas accumulate in the area and why wasn't it discovered sooner?

James Westfield, assistant director of the United States Bureau of Mines, said his party "didn't find many of the answers we were looking for." The investigation will continue this morning, he added.

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**MEANWHILE**, services for eight of the dead men were conducted as friends and relatives gathered under gloomy, overcast skies to pay their last respects. The remaining 14 will be buried today and tomorrow.

Following the investigators' second trip underground, Charles Ferguson, assistant safety director of the United Mine Workers of America, told newsmen, "We will stay here until we have the answers."

He said the most important question was to determine where the gas originated which was responsible for the deadly blast. He emphasized that the substance had been in the shaft for some time. "This didn't happen in 15 minutes," he added.

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**A FORMAL HEARING** has been set for 9:30 o'clock Thursday morning at which time representatives of the company, union and others will be questioned by the inspectors. It was not known last night where the meeting site will be.

The investigators agreed there probably had been interruptions in ventilation over a period of time, although the main fans

never stopped, officials reported.

Center of the explosion was at the fourth north entry, according to the officials. Force of the blast travelled about 2,000 feet, reports indicated.

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**MOST** of yesterday's activity con-

See MINE

On Page 3, Column 6

## Mine

Continued From Page 1

sisted of sealing off various sections of the mine and then opening doors to see if methane would accumulate. It didn't. "If it were present it would have been noticeable in 30 minutes." Ferguson said The doors were open nearly one and one-half hours.

The U. M. W. A. executive also noted evidence of smoking in the mine, but he discounted its importance. What touched off the explosion is secondary, he said, to locating the source of the gas.

Investigators said records showed no appreciable amount of gas in the mine for the past six months.

Westfield said the investigators anticipated having most of the facts in time for Thursday's hearing. He said the sworn testimony of mine workers and company officials should round out the investigation.

+ + +

**IT ALSO** was announced that

former U. M. W. A. President John L. Lewis, now retired, has "expressed deep concern" over the tragedy and has been in close contact with the inspection team. The 82-year-old man retired in January, 1960, and was replaced by Vice President Thomas Kennedy.

Buried yesterday were Elmo F. Ranard, 53 years old, and David C. Hale, 40, at Dugger; Clarence E. Chubb, 37, and Amil R. Petit, 34, at Hymera; Roy L. Stout, 37, at Shelburn; George Hill, 53, at Sullivan; James Turley, 55, at Farmersburg, and George S. Smith, 54, at Clinton.

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# U. S., State Mine Disaster Investigators Condemn Practice of Smoking in Viking

*See May 10-1961*  
Both federal and Indiana investigators issued reports yesterday condemning the practice of smoking in the Viking Mine where 22 workers died in an explosion March 2.

The inspectors did not go so far as to blame smoking for the blast at the Viking Coal Corporation mine, but both reports found explosive methane gas and coal dust were set off by an open flame or spark.

OPERATORS of the mine declined comment until they have a chance to study the full reports.

"Smoking underground evidently was a common practice," said the Bureau of Mines, "and management did not have a searching program to assure that smokers' articles were not carried into the mine."

Federal investigators reported 14 of the 22 blast victims were carrying either lighters, cigarettes or matches. Eight of the dead had both lighters and cigarettes.

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THE EXPLOSION came, said the report, "when an explosive mixture of methane-air was ignited by an electric arc or spark from electrical equipment or an open flame, and the explosion was propagated by methane and coal dust."

Made public by the Interior Department, the report said further: "The permissible loading machine and continuous miners were found in a non-permissible condition when examined after the explosion."

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THE NON-PERMISSIBLE shuttle cars had numerous openings into arcing electrical components, and all the equipment was capable of igniting gas . . ."

Both federal and state inspectors had rated the Viking Mine as "gassy" in tours prior to the blast, in which 33 other workers escaped injury.

A similar report was released by Charles A. Purcell who headed the Indiana Bureau of Mines

See **VIKING PROBE**  
On Page 2, Column 8

## Viking Probe

Continued From Page 1  
and Mining at the time of the explosion.

"I think that it (the gas) was ignited by an arc, spark or flame

created by one of the men or one of the machines . . ." he said.

+ + +

IN ADDITION to criticizing poor ventilation practices at the mine and urging more frequent checks for methane gas, Purcell said:

"No one should ever take any type of smoking material, matches or lighters underground at any time. There are two reasons for this. First, it is unlawful. Second, it is very hazardous."

Both groups came up with a series of recommendations in their reports. The U. S. Bureau listed 23 recommendations and the Indiana Bureau listed nine.

Both included the recommendation that taking any type of smoking material, matches or lighters underground should be prohibited, the federal investi-

gators stated the management should initiate a searching program to assure that smokers' articles are not carried into the mine.

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Community Affairs File



# Schedule Funeral Services For Victims in Disaster

*Int. - Star Mar 5 - 1961*

Funeral arrangements have been completed for the 22 miners who met death in Thursday night's explosion at the Viking mine. The arrangements follow:

**C. BURL AND JACK GUMMERE**—Dual funeral services for C. Burl Gummere, 53 years old, of 1115 Mary Lane, and his son Jack, of 1533 South Eighth street, will be at 1:30 o'clock Monday afternoon at the DeBaun Funeral Home. The Rev. John Rawlings will officiate and burial will be in Roselawn Memorial Park.

**JAMES L. NORTON**—Funeral services for James L. Norton, 28 years old, of RR 1, West Terre Haute, will be at 1 o'clock Monday afternoon at the Bedino Chapel of the Valley. The Rev. James Dickey will officiate and burial will be in Bethesda cemetery.

**MAX E. McGAUGHY**—Funeral services for Max E. McGaughy,

33 years old, of 3235 North Fifteenth street, will be at 3 o'clock Tuesday afternoon at the Thomas Funeral Home. The Rev. R. C. Mowery will officiate and burial will be in Roselawn Memorial Park.

**CLAUDE W. PARKER**—Funeral services for Claude W. Parker, 44 years old, of RR 7, will be at 10 o'clock Tuesday morning at the Thomas Funeral Home. The Rev. H. H. Howell will officiate and burial will be in Roselawn Memorial Park, with

*Continued On Page 10, Column 2.*

# Set Rites for Mine Victims

*Continued From Page One.*

graveside services conducted by William Penn Masonic Lodge. Friends may call after 6 o'clock Sunday evening.

**WILLIAM GATTI**—Funeral services for William Gatti, 37 years old, of 2901 Lafayette avenue, will be at 1 o'clock Tuesday afternoon at the Thomas Funeral Home. The Rev. Robert Davis will officiate and burial will be in Roselawn Memorial Park. He was a veteran of World War II. Friends may call after 2 o'clock Monday afternoon.

**ROBERT L. DAVIS**—Funeral services for Robert L. Davis, 27 years old, of 3122 North Twenty-third street, will be at 11 o'clock Monday afternoon at the Thomas Funeral Home. The Rev. William Saunders will officiate and burial will be in Highland Lawn cemetery. He was a member of the First Assembly of God Church.

**WILLIAM E. SCOTT**—Funeral services for William E. Scott, 56 years old, of 2101 Spang avenue, will be at 1 o'clock Monday afternoon at the Thomas Funeral Home. The Rev. Neil Kuns will officiate and burial will be in Roselawn Memorial Park.

**CHESTER D. GARDNER**—Funeral services for Chester D. Gardner, 34 years old, of Fontanet, will be at 1 o'clock Monday afternoon at the Mattox Funeral Home at Fontanet. The Rev. Albert Emmert will officiate and burial will be in Roselawn Memorial Park.

**DAVID C. HALE**—Funeral services for David C. Hale, 40 years old, of RR 2, Linton, will be at 2:30 o'clock Sunday afternoon at the Morris Chapel Church, near Dugger. The Rev. John Jerrells will officiate and burial will be in the adjoining cemetery. The body is at the Newkirk Funeral Home at Dugger.

**ELMO F. RANARD**—Funeral services for Elmo F. Ranard, 53 years old, of Dugger, will be at 11 o'clock Sunday morning at the Newkirk Funeral Home at Dugger. Robert Porter of the Jehovah's Witnesses will officiate and burial will be in Dugger cemetery. He was a member of the Dugger Masonic Lodge and the Scottish Rite, Valley of Terre Haute.

**JOHN MARTIN RANDALL**—Funeral services for John Martin Randall, 63 years old, of RR 1, Rosedale, will be at 10 o'clock Monday morning at the Frist Funeral Home at Clinton. The Rev. Chester Martin will officiate and burial will be in Riverside cemetery at Clinton.

**GEORGE SANFORD SMITH**—Funeral services for George Sanford Smith, 65 years old, of RR 1, Clinton (Fairview Park), will be at 1:30 o'clock Sunday after-

noon at the Frist Funeral Home. The Rev. Joseph L. Baker will officiate and burial will be in Helt's Prairie Cemetery, north of Clinton. Graveside services will be conducted by Jerusalem Lodge No. 99, F. & A. M., of Clinton, of which he was a member.

**WALLACE RIPPY**—Funeral services for Wallace Rippy, 58 years old, of 1116 South Fourth street, will be at 10:30 o'clock Monday morning at the Bedino Chapel of the Valley. The Rev. Dale Cottom will officiate. Interment will be in Roselawn Memorial Park.

**JAMES TURLEY**—Funeral services for James Turley, 55 years old, of Farmersburg, will be at 2 o'clock Sunday afternoon at the Fidler and Wood Funeral Home at Farmersburg. Interment will be in West Lawn cemetery there.

**GEORGE HILL**—Funeral services for George Hill, 53 years old, of 578 South Court street, Sullivan, will be at 2 o'clock Sunday afternoon at the Carrithers Funeral Home. The Rev. James McKinney will officiate and burial will be in West Lawn cemetery at Farmersburg.

**JOHN ELI STULTZ**—Funeral services for John Eli Stultz, 49 years old, of 225 North Main street, Sullivan, will be at 2 o'clock Monday afternoon at the Alexander Funeral Home at Sullivan. The Rev. Fred Rice will officiate and burial will be in Center Ridge cemetery. Friends may call after noon Sunday at the funeral home.

**JOSEPH C. SANQUENETTI SR.**—Funeral services for Joseph C. Sanquenetti Sr., 45 years old, RR 1, Rosedale, will be at 1:30 o'clock Monday afternoon at the Frist Funeral Home in Clinton. Interment will be in Roselawn Memorial Park. Graveside rites will be conducted by Rosedale Masonic Lodge 259, of which he was a member.

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**AMIL R. PETIT** — Funeral services for Amil R. Petit, 34 years old, of Hymera, will be at 1 o'clock Sunday afternoon at the McHugh Funeral Home at Hymera. The Rev. Russell Black will officiate and burial will be in K. of P. cemetery there.

**THOMAS GURCHIEK** — Funeral services for Thomas Gurchiek, 52 year old, 1803 Margaret avenue, will be at 10 a.m. Tuesday at the Callahan Funeral Home.

**ROY LEON STOUT** — Funeral services for Roy Leon Stout, 37 years old, of Shelburn, will be at 2 o'clock Sunday afternoon at the McHugh Funeral Home at Shelburn. The Rev. H. H. Howell will officiate and burial will be in Little Flock cemetery.

**CLARENCE E. CHUBB** — Funeral services for Clarence E. Chubb, 37 years old, of Hymera, will be at 3 o'clock Sunday afternoon at Hymera Church of God.

The Rev. Noah Beadle and the Rev. William Simpson will officiate and burial will be in K. of P. cemetery at Hymera. The body was taken to the McHugh Funeral Home at Hymera, and later transferred to the residence, where friends may call.

# Mine Workers' Views on Viking Explosion

By Nell

A watch with its wrist-band twisted from heat, the white face blackened and the hands stopped at 7:30—and two thermos bottles standing by, upright, untouched—these are some of the mute evidences found at the disaster scene of the Viking mine.

These and many other things have been noted by those who, for days, have been probing and investigating, trying to determine the cause of the catastrophe that took the lives of 22 men on March 2 at the mine located just across the Wabash River from the north end of Terre Haute.

Still unable to determine the cause, state and federal hearings opened Thursday at the County Courthouse in Terre Haute, with Mr. Westfield of the Federal Bureau of Mines from Washington, D. C. on hand; Charles Ferguson of the United Mine Workers Safety Division, also from Washington, and the Indiana Chief Mine Inspector Charles Purcell.

On that Thursday, March 2, the day shift at the Viking came up at quitting time. All had gone well. The second shift went down at 4 o'clock, to work till midnight.

These men at the Viking counted themselves lucky among miners, for there were 180 of them still working full eight-hour shifts, five days a week. Lucky up to that Thursday when 22 of them, aged 22 to 65, divided into two crews, each with a foreman, and went to the north run of the mine. Only coal dust, burned bodies and burned debris remained to tell their story.

What happened? What caused it?

Lack of modern equipment? Mr. Ernest Goad, president of the United Mine Workers District 11 here, says no.

Lack of protecting safety laws? Again no.

Officially no one knows—though some will admit they have their own theories.

Unofficially one miner said it.

"Sure I know what caused it. I'm no gas expert or anything like; but you don't have to be no expert to figure it. It was three things. Dust is one. There shouldn't be dust six inches thick on the floor. Number two, pockets of gas. Three, not enough break-throughs. Ought to be break-throughs for air every 45 feet, not 80.

"Then there's these bug lights. Used to be we wore gas lights. Talked into a place, there was no gas—poof!—and that was it. They've gotta crack down on the inspections."

Talking with Mr. Goad, president, and Mr. Ralph Day, secretary-treasurer of District 11, in the Terre Haute U. M. W. office, we learned a little more of the facts that lie behind such a disaster and such an operation as goes on at the Viking mine.

The 22 men who perished were all members of Local 9162, U. M. W. We also got a chance to talk with their local president, Clifford Kovalesski, 303 North 11th, of Terre Haute, and Jack Wilfon, 1344 Ohio Street, Terre Haute, mine committeeman, both young men.

They told us that everybody at the mine is laid off until after the investigation is over and there has been some determination as to what caused the fatal explosion. Asked if they wouldn't be afraid to go back down into

the mine, Mr. Kovalesski said, "No, of course not;" but Mr. Wilfon hesitated before he said, "Not until after they figure out what caused it."

During our talk Mr. Goad said, "I don't know how they can figure it out in that courtroom tomorrow if they couldn't do it all this past week at the mine."

"To the best of my memory," he went on, "I can't remember anything like this in the country taking so long to pinpoint. It just seems to go against all the rules."

The Viking coal mine is among the most modern. It is thoroughly mechanized with the great \$150,000 Col-Mol machines for boring in and digging at the coal, rectifiers, loading machines and conveyors.

The mine is located right next to the Public Service Co.'s generating plant and the electricity they make is from the coal mined here and carried over by conveyor. The Viking mine supplies coal to no other outfit.

The basic rate of pay for miners is \$24.25 for an eight-hour day—when they're working. At the Viking miners no longer wield pick-axes or other such hand equipment—they are machine operators entirely.

In fact, it was a short time ago that two new Col-Mol machines were installed in the mine and it caused 35 men to be laid off.

Asked their feeling on this sort of mechanization which causes lay-offs, Mr. Goad explained that the United Mine Workers have never tried to balk this sort of modernization, that they feel the solution lies in more shifts and less hours.

"Also," he said, "Better pay for the younger men and pensions for the older fellows."

Mr. Kovalesski added, "Sure, we're not the only industry with this problem. They've got it in auto and in steel—all over the country."

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## Work in Viking Mine to Resume

Between 15 and 20 miners were scheduled to return to work at 12:01 o'clock this morning in the Viking Coal Mine which claimed the lives of 22 miners March 2. All employees will report for their regular shifts.

Colvin Burk, general superintendent, said the men of the repair and maintenance shift will be working in the west section of the mine which was not affected by the fatal explosive blast.

Birch Brooks, vice president and general manager, said the United States Bureau of Mines and the State Bureau of Mines and Mining have given the company permission to begin cleaning up the blasted area. He said this should take about three weeks; another inspection will be necessary before this portion of the mine may be opened, he added.

The mine was closed following a gas explosion while federal and state inspectors attempted to determine the source of deadly methane gas which seeped into the mine and apparently caused the catastrophe.

A hearing was conducted here last Thursday and its results will be made public in about a month, a spokesman said.



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## Viking Inspection

## To Reopen Today

*Mon Mar 24 - 1961*

## Safety Study Slated In Explosion Area

Two announcements of significance in connection with the Viking Mine disaster, which occurred March 2 and took the lives of 22 men, were made last evening by Charles Purcell, director of the Indiana Bureau of Mines and Mining.

Personal belongings of the victims now are released to the families, it was stated, by the four parties conducting the hearing on the disaster.



**INSPECTION** of one portion of the explosion area to see if it is ready to be reopened will begin at 8 o'clock this morning by representatives of the United States Bureau of Mines, the Indiana Bureau of Mines and Mining and the Mine Safety Committee, composed of members of District 11, United Mine Workers of America.

Authorization to reopen the unaffected area of the mine was given March 11 and it reopened March 13. Repair of the affected areas began at that time.

The Seventh West area is now restored and is the part to be inspected today.

+ + +

**HEARING** on the disaster was conducted March 10 in the Vigo Circuit Court Room by four men representing the United States Bureau, the Indiana Bureau, the company and the union. Until the hearing was completed the personal belongings of the victims were kept for evidence.

They have been in the hands of Coroner D. M. Ferguson, who is moving his office Monday from 126 South Sixth Street to 648 Walnut Street.

Families may call at his office on South Sixth Street until Monday to obtain the personal belongings and after Monday at 648 Walnut Street.

The Green Valley Mine is operated by the Bledsoe Coal Company and serves the Public Service power plants along with the Viking Mine. While the Viking Mine was closed after the disaster, the Green Valley Mine was the sole supplier for the plants.

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## Viking Manager *Star Apr 12 - 1941* Defers Comment

In a statement issued yesterday, Birch Brooks, vice president and general manager of the Viking Coal Corporation, said he does not wish to comment on the report which appeared in the United Mine Workers' Journal pertaining to the causes of the Viking Mine disaster.

The disaster, which occurred March 2, claimed the lives of 22 men, including 20 members of the U. M. W. A.

"Any statement that I, or any member of the investigating committee would make at this time," Brooks said, "would be premature since members of this committee are still continuing the investigation."

"When finished, a complete report, signed by all four representatives of the various agencies, will be released. This entire committee consists of representatives of the Indiana Bureau of Mines and Mining, the United States Bureau of Mines, the United Mine Workers Safety Division, and the Mine Management."



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# Federal and State

## Investigators Seek Source of Explosion

*Sub Mar 9-1961*

By EULETA SLOVER

"I can think of no better way to open this meeting, seeking the truth regarding the explosion that killed 22 of our buddies, than to invoke the blessing of the author of truth," Charles Purcell, director of the Indiana Bureau of Mines and Mining, declared Thursday in opening a formal closed hearing into facts surrounding the Viking Mine explosion of last Thursday night.

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## Federal, State Experts Study Blast Evidence

*Mar 9, 1961*

Meeting at 9:30 a.m. in the Vigo County Circuit Courtroom, a panel of four questioners headed by Purcell sought to "ascertain the truth as to what happened in there" and from where the methane gas originated that touched off the gas and dust explosion.

Also seated on the board of inquiry were F. J. Smith, district supervisor for the U. S. Bureau of Mines; Charles Ferguson, safety director for the United Mine Workers of America, and Birch Brooks, vice president and general manager of the Viking Coal Company.

The courtroom was almost filled to capacity as Purcell opened the session with prayer and a statement of purpose of the inquiry.

"This is not a public hearing, its not a trial. I suppose you would call it more of a question and answer period in an attempt to learn the truth," he explained, in asking all, except the inquiry participants, to leave the courtroom.

Among the local, state and national mining figures seated immediately behind the inquiry panel were: Ernest Goad of Terre Haute, president of District 11, UMWA; James Westfield, inspector for the Federal Bureau of Mines, and Hobert Butler, Indiana Commissioner of Labor.

It has been speculated, based on past hearings in such matters, that the inquiry may consume two days of deliberation and questioning.

Those scheduled to assist the panel principally consist of mine personnel, rescue team members, company officials, union, state and federal mine safety experts who figured in the rescue or subsequent investigation.

### Closed Since Explosion.

The slope mine, normally employing 175 to 200 men in supplying coal for the nearby Wabash Power Generating Station of the Public Service Company of Indiana, Inc., has been closed since the explosion.

Purcell stated Friday that reported information that the main west section of the mine, the area not effected by the explosion, probably would be reopened for work Monday "is unfounded at this time."

He added that it could happen but no such order has been given to date and in any such order his office would necessarily figure.



He noted that "there are not too many persons to question" at the hearing "since all those who really knew what happened are dead." All workers in the ex-

plosion area were dead when reached by rescue teams.

The mine is located about eight miles north of West Terre Haute and east of U. S. Highway 150 on the west bank of the Wabash River.

# Secret Hearing Thursday on Mine Disaster

*Jul - June 8 - 1961*

Officials investigating the Viking Mine blast which killed 22 men spent a final day Wednesday probing for data before Thursday's hearing.

The hearing is scheduled for Thursday at 9:30 a.m. in the Vigo Circuit Court room under the direction of Charles Purcell, director of the Indiana Bureau of Mines and Mining.

Its purpose will be to determine the cause of the explosion which wiped out 22 lives last Thursday evening. Generally officials seem to agree the blast was caused by gas and dust, but the prime questions are what was the source of the gas and what set off the explosion.

The hearing will be closed to

the public once questioning of witnesses begins. Witnesses will be kept out of the court room until they take the stand so that no witness will hear the testimony of the others.

Those called to testify will be miners, company representatives, and men who participated in the investigation of the explosion.



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## Viking Explosion *Star Mer 8-1961* Inquiry Continues

Fifth day of investigation of the disastrous explosion at Viking Mine the night of March 2 which took 22 lives will be today.

It will be the last day of examination of the mine prior to the opening of the hearing on the disaster, which will be at 9:30 o'clock Thursday morning in the Vigo Circuit Court Room.

The hearing will be closed to the public after the examination of witnesses begins, it was stated last night by those in charge. Following the opening of the hearing, the witnesses will be separated and will not hear the testimony of others. They will be called one at a time.

Conducting the hearing will be Charles Purcell, director of the Indiana Bureau of Mines and Mining.

Witnesses will include miners, company representatives and men who have participated in the investigation of the explosion which occurred last Thursday night.

It has definitely been determined it was a gas explosion propagated by dust but the source of the gas and source of ignition have not been determined. There were no new discoveries yesterday, it was stated last night following the completion of yesterday's inspection.

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# Viking Mine Disaster Hearing Ends; Reports, Conclusions Due in 30 Days

Mar 16 - 1961

Hearing on the Viking Mine disaster which took the lives of 22 miners the night of March 2 was concluded at 3:30 o'clock yesterday afternoon with no final judgment reached.

While the hearing was going on men still were going into the mine seeking further evidence of the source of the gas

which exploded and of the source of its ignition. This investigation will continue, it was stated last night.

+ + +

**ANNOUNCEMENT** of the conclusion of the hearing, which he termed fruitful and co-operative, was made by Rex Lauck, assistant editor of the United Mine Workers of America Journal. He was authorized to speak for the four-man hearing board.

Charles Purcell, director of the Indiana Bureau of Mines and Mining, was chairman of the hearing. Others were F. J. Smith, supervisor of the Vincennes district office of the United States Bureau of Mines; Charles Ferguson, national director of safety for the U. M. W. A., and Birch Brooks, vice president and general manager of Viking Coal Corporation.

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**BETWEEN** eight and 10 witnesses were heard, Lauck said, including company employes and miners. Among them were Jess Sheperd, mine manager; Henry Robertson, night foreman whose unanswered call to the explosion victims revealed something was wrong; bosses on the two-day shift crews who worked the area where the explosion occurred and the men operating the two Colmols on those crews; the safety committeeman who was working in the unaffected section of the mine at the time of the explosion, and the fire boss.

Reports are expected to be written on the hearing and investigation by both state and fed-

eral authorities within the next 30 days and both will be available as soon as completed and studied, Lauck continued. The main purpose of such a hearing, he pointed out, is to prevent another disaster of the same type occurring here or elsewhere.

+ + +

**INVESTIGATION** of the disaster has been under way since last Saturday morning.

The Vigo Circuit Court Room was filled to capacity when the hearing opened. After stating, "I can think of no better way to open this meeting, seeking the truth regarding the explosion that killed 22 of our buddies, than to invoke the blessing of the author of truth," Purcell opened it with prayer. He then stated it was not a public hearing nor was it a trial. "I suppose you would call it more of a question and answer period in an attempt to learn the truth," he said, and asked all except the inquiry participants to leave the room.

Among mining figures present were the officers of District 11, U. M. W. A., which has its headquarters here; James Westfield, assistant director of the United States Bureau of Mines, and Hobert Butler, Indiana commissioner of labor.

While state and federal authorities last night had not yet given permission to open the unaffected area of the mine, it was expected it probably would open the first of the week, authorities said.

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# Viking Mine Explosion Investigation

*Star News - 1961*

## Continues Today; U. S. Aide Optimistic

Continuance of the investigation of the disastrous blast at Viking Mine last Thursday night which claimed the lives of 22 miners is scheduled for today.

In an interview last night, James Westfield, assistant director of the United States Bureau of Mines, said that since the investigation began Saturday morning a great deal of information has been obtained. He is certain the cause will be pinpointed before the hearings are finished.

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**IT IS KNOWN** definitely that it was a combination of ignition of gas propagated to some extent by dust. However, before coming to a conclusion in a disaster of this type, the source of the methane (gas) must be determined, together with the source of ignition and the extent to which dust entered into it.

The hearing to be conducted will lead to some solution of this matter, together with evaluation of samples taken during the investigation. It is expected the hearing, to begin at 9:30 o'clock Thursday morning, will last at least one or two days.

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**WESTFIELD** was high in his praise of the co-operation of all parties involved. He particularly mentioned the two Viking Mine safety committee members who, working under the direction of Charles Ferguson, national director of safety for the United Mine Workers of America, have evidenced the most outstanding co-operation and interest.

The area involved in the explosion was comparatively small—about 2,000 feet, only two working sections—compared to the loss of life, Westfield said.

Old working sections also were explored yesterday. The source of the methane still is one of the main problems to be solved.

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**UNITED STATES** Bureau of Mines personnel from the Vincennes district office who are participating in the investigation include: F. J. Smith, district supervisor; Clem Dovidas, R. W. Whitaker, James McCune and Louis Lorenzo, coal mine inspectors, and Sanford Douglas, electrical inspector. Frank Perz, mine inspector attached to the office but located in Terre Haute, also is participating. The Vincennes office services Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Iowa and western Kentucky.

Charles Purcell heads the state representatives. Working under him are Roy Hudson and William Sharp. Fred Conrad is the representative of Lynch Coal Operators Reciprocal Association. Also working on the inspection are the representatives of the mine's safety committee, mentioned before, and representatives of the operator.

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# Delay Decision On Investigation Of Mine Blast

*Sub. matter - 1961*

A formal hearing into facts surrounding the March 2 gas and dust explosion that killed 22 miners at the Viking Coal Mine, north of West Terre Haute, was concluded in its opening day Thursday.

Rex Lauck, assistant editor of the United Mine Workers of America Journal, authorized spokesman for the board of inquiry, said no final judgment was reached.

He added that written reports on the hearing and investigation will be issued within the next 30 days by both state and federal authorities.

State and federal authority to reopen the area of the mine not affected by the blast has not been given, local officials advised Friday.

However, company officials were readying the mine in the hope that such authorization might be forthcoming in time to resume limited operations next week.

Approximately 10 witnesses were questioned Thursday during the hearing held in the courtroom of the Vigo Circuit Court.

Charles Purcell, director of the Indiana Bureau of Mines and Mining, acted as chairman. The other three questioners were F. J. Smith, supervisor of the Vincennes district office of the U. S. Bureau of Mines; Charles Ferguson, UMWA safety director, and Birch Brooks, vice president and general manager of the Viking Coal Corporation.

Some of those called in the session that lasted approximately six hours were Jess Sheperd, mine manager; Henry Robertson, night foreman, whose unanswered call to the explosion victims revealed something wrong; bosses on the two day-shift crews who worked the area where the explosion occurred; operators of the two Col-Mols of the area; the safety committeeman working the affected area, and the fire boss

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# Mining Experts Continue Hunt For Gas Source

*Ind. Mar 7-1961*

The source of the gas that fed the explosion killing 22 miners at the Viking mine is still the major problem of the investigators.

Twenty-one members of the various teams continued to probe the depths of the mine today in preparation for the hearing Thursday morning at 9:30 a.m. in the Vigo Circuit Court room.

James Westfield, inspector for the Federal Bureau of Mines, said many clues have been obtained from the relatively small explosion area. The explosion, he said, evidently involved both gas and dust.

The chief problems are to determine the source of the gas and the cause of ignition.

Westfield was high in his praise of the co-operation of all parties involved. He particularly mentioned the two Viking Mine safety committee members who, working under the direction of Charles Ferguson, national director of safety for the United Mine Workers of America, have evidenced the most outstanding co-operation and interest.

The area involved in the explosion was comparatively small—about 2,000 feet, only two working sections—compared to the loss of life, Westfield said.

## Check Old Workings.

Old working sections also were explored yesterday.

United States Bureau of Mines personnel from the Vincennes district office who are participating in the investigation include: F. J. Smith, district supervisor; Clem Dovidas, R. W. Whitaker, James McCune and Louis Lorenzo, coal mine inspectors, and Sanford Douglas, electrical inspector. Frank Perz, mine inspector attached to the office but located in Terre Haute, also is participating. The Vincennes office services Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Iowa and western Kentucky.

Charles Purcell heads the state representatives. Working under him are Roy Hudson and William Sharp. Fred Conrad is the representative of Lynch Coal Operators Reciprocal Association. Also working on the inspection are the representatives of the mine's safety committee, mentioned before, and representatives of the operator.

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# UMW Criticizes Viking Practices

*Sub-ops 11-1961*

Charles Ferguson, director of safety for the United Mine Workers, contends he found evidence of poor safety practices in the Viking Mine where an explosion March 2 killed 22 miners.

Reporting in the UMW's Journal, Ferguson listed these points as "bad mining practices":

"Electrical equipment in non-permissible condition.

"The practice of loading coal onto the bottom of the working places to such an extent that ventilation was almost cut off.

"And, much evidence of general deterioration of management responsibility around the mine."

Birch Brooks, vice president and general manager of the mine, declined to comment on the specific charges made by Ferguson.

"He has his own opinion. We have nothing to do with the United Mine Workers."

## Awaits Bureau Report.

Brooks added that the U. S. Bureau of Mines will make the official report on the explosion.

Ferguson, who was a member of the investigating team that entered the mine on March 4 to determine the cause of the disaster, made the report to John L. Lewis, president emeritus of the UMWA, and its three international officers: Thomas Kennedy, president; W. A. Boyle, vice president, and John Owens, secretary-treasurer. He flew here immediately upon learning of the explosion, arriving early on March 3.

He said there was "the obvious indication that smoking in the mine was overlooked and undoubtedly condoned by management." (However, in another place, Ferguson said he doubted if smoking touched off the explosion.)

## "Safety Deterioration."

"Much evidence of a general deterioration of management responsibility in the field of safety in and around the mine," he continued. He noted the primary evidence of this was the grave lack of communication between the foremen and the section bosses. However, Ferguson added that the attitude toward safety he cited was not peculiar to Viking Mine.

The union official said there had not been adequate checking for traces of the methane gas which is blamed for the explosion, too little attention was paid to ventilation and rock dusting had been inadequate.

Ferguson reported that he doubts whether investigators ever will find the exact cause of the explosion.

His report on the examination of machines states "all machinery except the Colmol Miner" was in non-permissible condition.

He also stated "investigators were not hindered in their progress by roof falls which was due to the fact that the roof was supported throughout by proper roof-bolting procedures."

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# Federal Report Blames Spark, Or Open Flame

*Int May 9-1936*

The death of 22 miners at the Viking Mine here March 2 has been blamed on a gas explosion touched off by an electric spark or an open flame.

Both the Federal and State mining authorities released their reports Tuesday morning, generally agreeing on the cause of the tragedy.

The state report was issued locally by Ralph C. Newman, director of the Indiana Bureau of Mines and Mining from his Terre Haute office. However, the report was prepared by Charles Purcell, who was in office at the time of the explosion.

The federal report especially stressed the possibility that the explosion was a direct result of smoking underground.

"Smoking underground evidently was common practice" in the Viking mine of the Viking Coal Corp. near Terre Haute, Ind., where the 22 men died, the federal report said.

"Smoking was not observed underground at the time of the last federal inspection in December," the report said. "However, smokers' articles were listed among the personal effects of many of the explosion victims including the foremen."

## Recommendations.

Purcell issued a list of nine recommendations for preventing future explosions. The federal report listed 23 recommendations. Most of the recommendations of state and federal were similar.

Hobart Butler, Indiana state labor commissioner, said the investigation showed the miners "knew an explosion was coming because they left their places of work."

Butler said Indiana has had 24 mine deaths this year. He said nine inspectors would visit mines "much more frequently" in the future than the once-every-three-months rate of inspection in the past.

## Equipment Listed.

In summarizing the evidence, the report made public by the Interior Department said in part:

"Permissible and non-permissible equipment was used in the . . . working section, but the permissible loading machine and continuous miners were found in a non-permissible condition when examined after the explosion. The non-permissible shuttle cars had numerous openings into arcing electrical components, and all the equipment was capable of igniting gas.

"Matches, lighters and cigarettes were listed among the personal effects found on victims of the explosion, and two packs of cigarettes and a lighter were found in the mine after the explosion.

"Fourteen of the 22 victims had either lighters, cigarettes or matches and eight had lighters and cigarettes.

"Smoking underground evidently was common practice, and management did not have a searching program to assure that smokers' articles were not carried into the mine."

## Find Evidence.

Adding further emphasis to the possibility that smoking might have played a part in the disaster, the report listed among its recommendations:

"The practice of smoking, carrying matches, lighters, and smoking materials underground should be prohibited, and management should initiate a searching program to assure that smoker's articles are not carried into the mine."

The report said bureau investigators believed the explosion originated "when an explosive mixture of methane-air was ignited by an electric arc or spark from electrical equipment or an open flame, and that the explosion was propagated by methane and coal dust."

It said analysis of a coal sample from the mine indicated that dust from the coal is explosive and added that the mine was rated as "gassy" by federal and state mine inspectors.

Thirty-three additional men in the mine at the time of the blast escaped uninjured.

## Same Ideas.

Purcell's state report was quite similar to the federal.

"I think the explosion was ignited by an arc, spark or flame created by one of the men or one of the machines as they pulled into the position in which they were found," Purcell wrote. The reason the gas accumulated in such proportions was because the line brattice, or curtain, was removed after mining ceased, thus removing positive ventilation from the face."

Purcell made these recommendations:

—Foremen should follow mining plan and all other orders from superiors.

—Foremen and operators of electrical equipment should test for methane gas more often.

—Line brattices should not be removed immediately after mining ceases, and when removed a close watch should be kept on the place from where they are removed until such time as they can be sure a methane gas feeder is not present in the area.

—Ventilating doors should never be left open any longer than is necessary to pass through them.

—Electrical equipment should be maintained in a permissible manner at all times.

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—Coal should never be allowed to accumulate on the floor to the extent it will interfere with ventilation.

—Some type of auxiliary ventilation and continuous gas detection is a must in connection with continuous mining.

—No one should ever take any type of smoking material, matches or lighters underground at any time. First it is unlawful. Second, it is very hazardous.

—More care should be taken in the transportation, storage and uses of oxygen and acetylene gas in the coal mines.

The federal report said management should "initiate a searching program" to make sure the miners carried no smoking materials underground.



## Many Bereaved Families Plan Funerals For Their Dead in Viking Explosion

Victims of the explosion Thursday night at Viking Mine were identified and claimed by the families yesterday morning at the Bedino Chapel of the Valley where all bodies were taken.

+ + +

### C. BURL AND JACK GUMMERE

—Dual funeral services for C. Burl Gummere, 53 years old, of 1115 Mary Lane, and his son Jack, of 1533 South Eighth Street, will be at 1:30 o'clock Monday afternoon at the DeBaun Funeral Home. The Rev. John Rawlings will officiate and burial will be in Roselawn Memorial Park. C. Burl Gummere is survived by the widow, Frances; a son, Jerry Gummere of Bloomington, Ill.; a daughter, Miss Johanna Gummere of Terre Haute; a stepdaughter, Mrs. Marcia Kern of Indianapolis; a sister, Miss Dorothy Gummere of Terre Haute, and five grandchildren. Surviving the son, Jack Gummere, are the widow, Catherine; two sons, Mike and Jeff, both at home; the step-mother, Mrs. Frances Gummere; a sister,

Miss Johanna Gummere of Terre Haute, a stepsister, Mrs. Marcia Kern of Indianapolis, and a brother, Jerry Gummere of Bloomington, Ill. Friends may call after 6 o'clock this evening at the DeBaun chapel.

+ + +

**JAMES L. NORTON** — Funeral services for James L. Norton, 28 years old, of R. R. 1, West Terre Haute, will be at 1 o'clock Monday afternoon at the Bedino Chapel of the Valley. The Rev. James Dickey will officiate and burial will be in Bethesda Cemetery. Surviving are the widow

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# Clinton Miner Missed Disaster Due to Illness

TRIB MARCH 3, 1961

Lynton Mose Fisher, 46, Clinton looked at the mine shaft and walked away slowly.

"If I'd worked," he said, "I'd be dead. They've already found the men where I'd have been working."

Fisher said he didn't work in the Viking Coal mine yesterday because his doctor had ordered him to take a week off.

## Theory on Blast.

Fisher said he had figured out what caused the explosion that killed 22 miners in the shaft.

"They were working over an old shaft. The shaft was about 150 feet below the one we were mining in. Gas seeped up to our shaft and was ignited by some kind of spark."

There were other miners who missed the explosion by some sort of coincidence.

Norman Price of West Terre Haute was sent to the other side of the mine—where 22 miners escaped the explosion—shortly before the blast.

## Spat Saved Him.

Another miner—who wouldn't give his name—said he missed the explosion because of a spat with his wife.

His soldier son had been visiting them and the miner had planned to go to work while his wife took the son to the airport in Indianapolis, 90 miles away.

But the wife didn't fix the miner's sandwiches to take to work.

The miner got sore at her, decided to drive to Indianapolis with the boy himself—and lived. It was later learned the man was Robert Forbes of Shelburn.

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# Fatality List

*Inf Mar 3 1961*

(Obituary Notices on  
Page 14).

Here are the names of  
the 22 miners killed in an  
explosion in the Viking  
Mine Thursday:

Joseph Sanquenetti, 45,  
RR 1, Rosedale.

John Stultz, 49, Sullivan.

Roy Stout, 37, Shelburn.

James Turley, 55, RR 1,  
Farmersburg.

C. Burl Gummere, 53,  
1115 Mary Lane, Terre  
Haute.

William Gatti, 37, 2901  
Lafayette avenue, Terre  
Haute.

James L. Norton, 28,  
RR 1, West Terre Haute.

Amil Petit, 34, RR 1,  
Shelburn.

John M. Randall, 62,  
RR 1, Rosedale.

Claude Parker, 44, RR  
7, Terre Haute.

George S. Smith, 59,  
RR 1, Clinton.

Clarence Chubb, 37, Hy-  
mera.

David C. Hale, 40, RR 2,  
Linton.

Robert Davis, 27, 3122  
North Twenty-third street,  
Terre Haute.

George Hill Jr., 54, Sullivan.

Thomas Gurchiek, 52,  
1803 Margaret avenue,  
Terre Haute.

Jack Gummere, 31, 1533  
South Eighth street, Terre  
Haute

Max McGaughy, 34, 3235  
North Fifteenth street,  
Terre Haute.

William Scott, 56, 2101  
Spang avenue, Terre  
Haute.

Elmo Ranard, 54, Dug-  
ger.

Chester Gardner, 34,  
Fontanet.

Wallace Rippy, 58, 1116  
South Fourth street, Terre  
Haute.

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## Gruesome Scenes as Bodies Of Victims Are Identified

*Link March 3 1941*

A rasping buzzer alerted the waiting wives and children each time a coal car came to the surface of the disaster-wracked Viking coal mine today.

Its guttural bark cut through the chill pre-dawn air as sharply as two arc lights knifed through the darkness.

Two quick blasts . . . three more in rapid succession . . . then a single rasp.

Simultaneously, a green light flashed at the head of the steep-incline shaft.

Each time the buzzer started its signal of arrival, the sobbing, red-eyed women pressed forward.

Talking ceased. The huddled crowd drew closer 'round the crude concrete and frame lean-to shack that covered the gaping hole in the ground.

### Reluctant to Talk.

Sometimes the car brought up dirt-begrimed rescue workers, reluctant to talk about what they had seen below.

Other times it brought burned bodies, draped in dull yellow burlap.

Under the garish arc lights, Viking vice president Birch Brooks looked at each body, then turned and asked miners standing nearby:

"Does anyone know this man?"

Usually someone—a co-worker, a friend, a brother or a wife—claimed the body. Names on belt buckles provided tentative identifications for others.

With identity established, Brooks walked toward the huddled crowd to console the family. Each time he repeated the walk, the crowd seemed almost to shrink back.

One woman leaned on another, crying "Oh, my God. Oh, my God."

A boy, 10 or 12 years old, clung

to a woman and sobbed: "I want my father."

Rescue crews placed each body on a stretcher, loaded it in an ambulance and carted it away to the Bedino funeral home in West Terre Haute.

### Wife Becomes Widow.

Mrs. Clarence Chubb, 38, took up her vigil at 1 a.m. She sat on a nearby bench. Her mother, Mrs. Paul Carpenter, held a blanket around the haggard, sobbing woman. At her elbow was her daughter Nancy, 14.

At 6.30 a.m. the two women and one little girl still waited to learn the fate of Mrs. Chubb's husband, Clarence. His body was brought out at 6:55.

Chubb, 38, was boss of his crew and eight years a miner in the West Central Indiana coal fields. His men called him "Red." His father and grandfather were miners, to, as were Mrs. Carpenter's husband, his father and his father's father.

"Mining has been our way of life," Mrs. Chubb said. "It seems like when they get down there they like it."

"You never know when it's going to happen to you."

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# Think Coal-cutting Machine May Have Set Off Explosion

*Lib Mar 3 1967*

By EULETA SLOVER

The mine diggings at the disaster involved the fifth vein of coal, one veteran miner stated. The vein is located below the third and fourth coal veins which were worked out more than 20 years ago by the Snow Hill or Talleydale Mine, whose tippie was located about two miles due north of the Viking tippie.

Tom Sevier, Sullivan County miner employed at the Ayrshire Minnehaha Mine, east of Sullivan, said it is possible the machinery being used cut into a gas pocket which had formed from collapsed entries of the worked out upper veins.

A type of mining machinery known as a "continuous miner" was being used, he explained. Also called a "como run," the apparatus, he said, goes before the work crew doing the complete job of cutting away the

coal from the face of the vein, loading it onto conveyors which carry it to mine cars for transporting to the surface.

He theorized that the machine may have cut into an accumulated gas pocket, touching off the resultant gas and dust explosion.

Other Miners Safe?

Miners who reached safety in the early minutes of the explosion.

Continued On Page 2, Column 2.

## Express Theory On Explosion

Continued From Page One.

sion reportedly were working on the same level but in the area that ran in the opposite direction off the shaft. Length of the area in which they were working "runs about two miles back into the vein," one mine employee said.

As surface crews labored to police the area after ambulances, families, rescue teams, company and mine officials and scores of other anxious persons had left the scene, three miners' dinner pails were seen sitting beside the idle conveyor, the last on-the-scene link to the lives that had been snuffed out within the mine.

Covered with dust, dented and puffed out, they bore evidence of the heat that had been generated by the force of the explosion. A memento key chain attached to one read: "Linton Open House."

One was empty, another was half-filled with water, the third held its complete contents of food and water untouched. Ironically, it also contained a plastic medicine bottle containing green pills which Sevier surmised may have been pain pills.

"Most all miners carry aspirins or some sort of pain killers," was Sevier's sad note.

One of the pails displayed a label which read "Safe Today, Alive Tomorrow, Carbide Mining Tools."

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# Picture Story of Blast By

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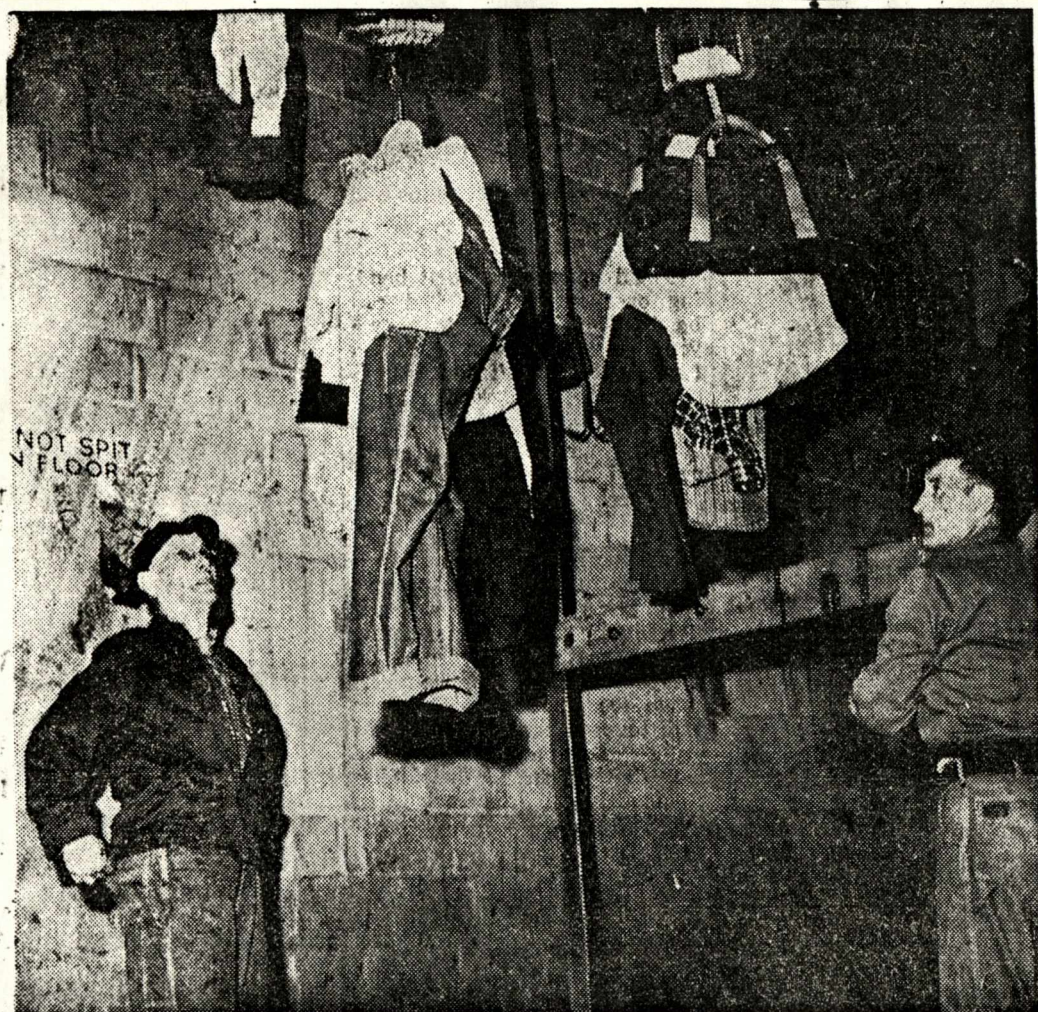


A BIG CROWD BUT MOSTLY SILENT—Miners, rescue workers, and sullen relatives of the victims mill around the shaft of the Viking Coal Co. mine about eight miles northwest of Terre Haute.

Photos by Charles.

Tribune Cameramen



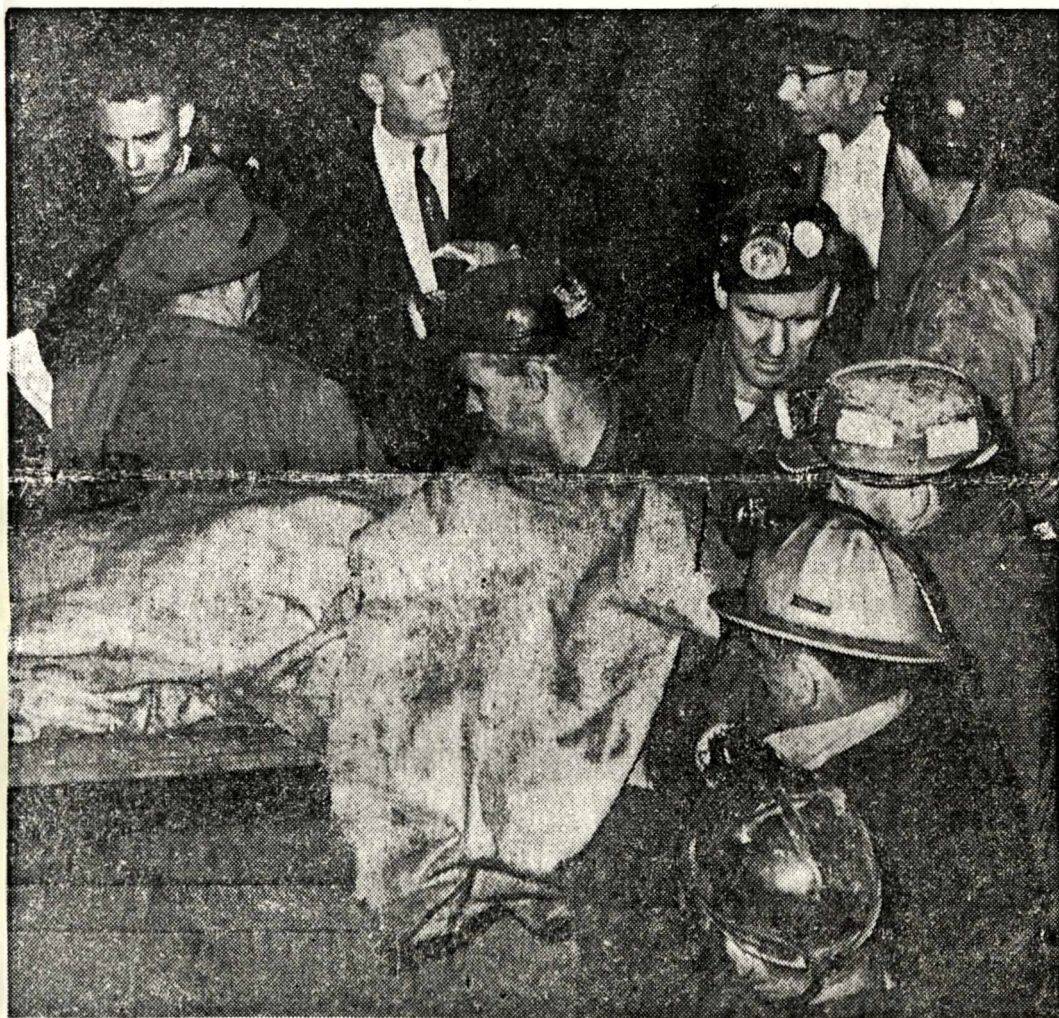


## *Others Have to Call for Their Clothes*

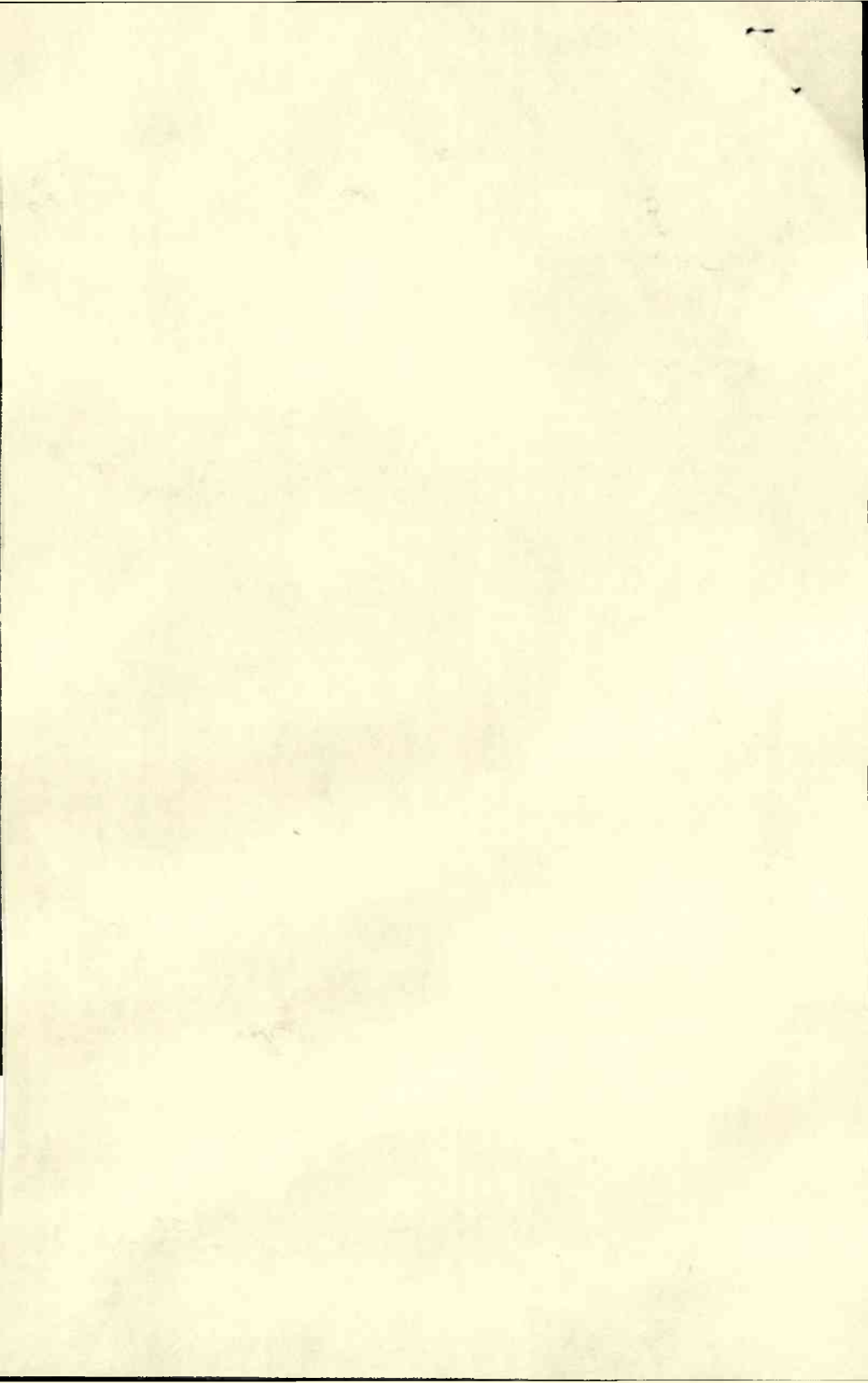
**A FATHER'S DUTY**—An unidentified father of a victim reports to the washhouse to claim his son's clothing a short time after the body was brought to the surface.



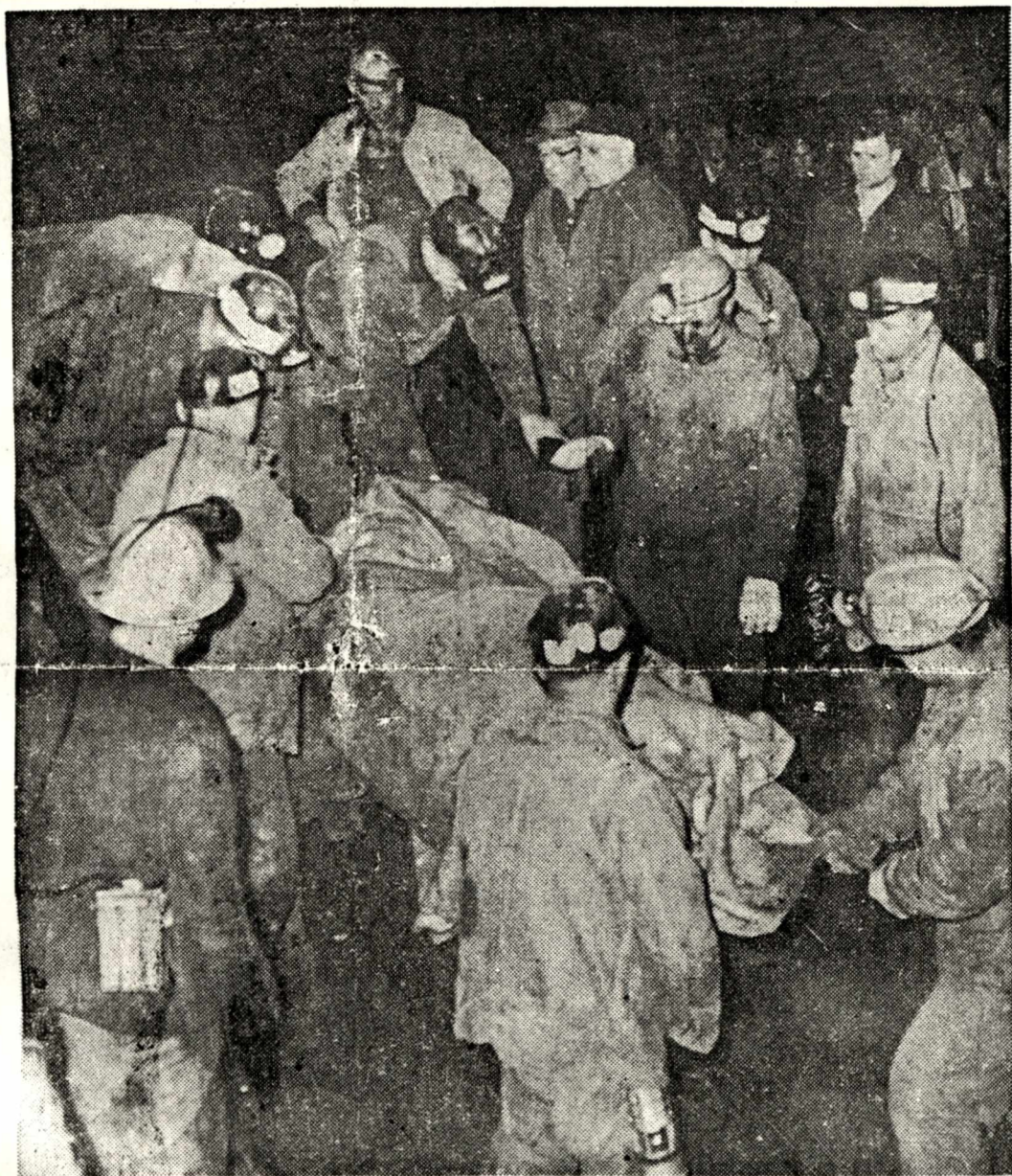
# *The Grim Work of the Mine Explosion Hidden Beneath the Burlap Sacks*



**SIGNAL OF DEATH**—A stretcher covered by a dust-covered blanket indicated another dead victim had been found, as rescuers emerge to the surface. In the center background is Dr. D. M. Ferguson, Vigo County coroner.







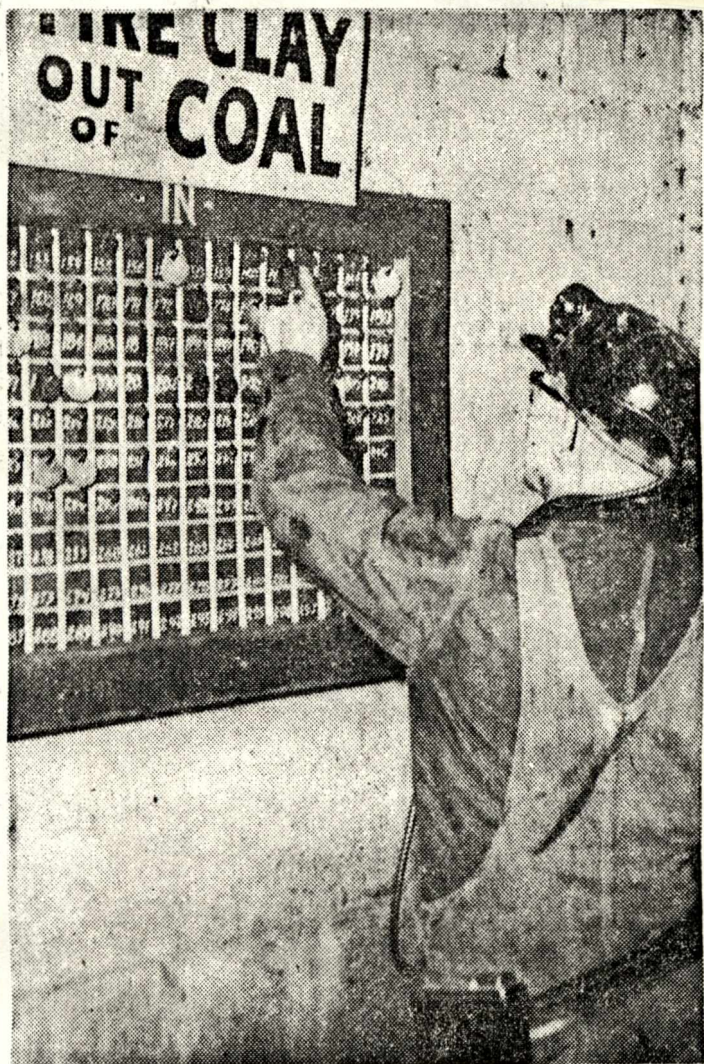
**SCENE REPEATED 22 TIMES**—Rescue workers lift the covered body of the coal miner from a mine car. In all, 22 dead miners were recovered by 8 a.m. Friday at the Viking mine northwest of Terre Haute.



## *Minutes Seem Like Hours As Relatives Wait*



**A GRIM VIGIL**—Sullen, black stares like these easily identified those who lost loved ones in the mine. Miss Johanna Gummere, at left, lost a father and brother, Burl, 53, and Jack, 31.



**INITIAL CASUALTY COUNT**—This wall chart gave the first indications of how many miners were in the mine at the time of the explosion. Each miner leaves his metal tab over his number as he gets ready to descend.





**PIN-POINTS TRAGEDY**—Phil Jones, a miner, uses huge wall map to show newsmen the spot of the explosion which wiped out the lives of 22 miners Thursday night. Jones was scheduled to go to work this morning.



*Expressions of Awe, Clutched Hands  
Depict the Tenseness of the Crowd*



**HUNDREDS GATHER AT TRAGEDY SCENE**—The rope keeps back the curious crowd that gathered at the scene as soon as word of the explosion was reported by news media in the middle of the night.



# Rites for Mine Blast Victims

Int. Mar 3-1961

**CHESTER D. GARDNER**—The body of Chester D. Gardner, 34, of Fontanet, was taken to the Mattox Funeral Home in Fontanet pending arrangements. Gardner, a machine operator at the mine, was a member of Masonic Lodge No. 264, F&AM, Brazil. Surviving are the widow, Ina; three children, Penny Sue, Earl and Rex, all at home; a sister, Mrs. Patsy Cottrell of Crawfordville; a brother, Maurice Gardner of RR 6, Terre Haute, and the parents, Mr. and Mrs. William Gardner of Fontanet.

**CLARENCE E. CHUBB**—The body of Clarence E. Chubb, 37, of Hymera, a veteran of World War II, was taken to the McHugh Funeral Home at Hymera pending arrangements. Surviving are the widow, Helen; a son, Richard; two daughters, Nancy and Kathy, all at home; the mother, Mrs. Maggie Chubb of RR3, Sullivan; three brothers, Raymond, and James, both of RR 3, Sullivan, and Jack of Shelburn, and two sisters, Mrs. Doris Cox of Sullivan and Mrs. Mildred Cole of Hymera.

**RAY LEON STOUT**—The body of Ray Leon Stout, 37, of Shelburn, a veteran of World War II, was taken to the McHugh Funeral Home in Shelburn pending arrangements. Surviving are the widow, Bonnie; four sons, Danny, Joe, Steven and David; three daughters, Kathy, Karen and Ellen; a stepson, Frankie Waldon, and a stepdaughter, Madeline Waldon, all at home; the parents, Mr. and Mrs. Troy Stout of Shelburn, and two brothers, Jack of Shelburn and Robert of Bloomfield.

**JOHN MARTIN RANDALL** — The body of John Martin Randall, 63, of Lyford, was taken to the Frist Funeral Home in Clinton pending funeral arrangements. He was a member of the One Half Century Club at Clinton. Surviving are the widow, Mary E.; two sons, Charles R. Randall of Washington, D. C., and Paul C. Randall of El Cajun Valley, Calif.; four grandchildren, and four sisters, Mrs. Daisy Spears of Kalamazoo, Mich., Mrs. Elsie Harris of Decatur, Mich., Mrs. Irene Beach of Marcelus, Mich., and Mrs. Minnie Reid of St. Louis, Mo.

**JACK GUMMERE** — The body of Jack Gummere, 31, of 1533 South Eighth street, was taken to the DeBaun Funeral Home in Terre Haute pending funeral arrangements. Surviving are the wife, Catherine; two sons, Mike and Jeff; the stepmother, Mrs. Frances Gummere; one sister, Miss Johanna Gummere of Terre Haute; one stepsister, Mrs. Marcia Kern of Indianapolis, and one brother, Jerry of Bloomington, Ill.



THOMAS GURCHIEK

**C. BURL GUMMERE** — The body of Burl Gummere, 53, of 1115 Mary Lane, was taken to the DeBaun Funeral Home in Terre Haute pending funeral arrangements. Surviving are the wife, Frances; one son, Jerry of Bloomington, Ill.; one daughter, Miss Johanna Gummere of Terre Haute; one stepdaughter, Mrs. Marcia Kern of Indianapolis; one sister, Miss Dorothy Gummere of Terre Haute and five grandchildren.

**WILLIAM GATTI** — The body of William Gatti, 37, of 2901 Lafayette avenue, was taken to the Thomas Funeral Home pending arrangements. He was a veteran of World War II. Surviving are the widow, Betty; a daughter, Cristy; and a son, Billy, both at home; the parents, Mr. and Mrs. Mario Gatti of Terre Haute; two brothers, Arthur of Indianapolis and Joseph of Arizona, and a sister, Mrs. Helen Harbaugh of Terre Haute.

**THOMAS GURCHIEK** — The body of Thomas Gurchiek, 52, of 1803 Margaret avenue, was taken to the Callahan Funeral Home pending arrangements. Surviving are the wife, Vivian; eight children, Bartholome, Duane, and Thomas Jr., all at home; Albert

with the Armed Forces in Germany; Madonna, Michele and Theresa, all at home; Theresa of Indianapolis and Bonnie of Farmersburg; eight stepchildren, Mrs. Verna Riker, Mrs. Elta Lister and Mrs. Virginia Whitt, all of Terre Haute; and Mrs. Shirley Davis of West Terre Haute; Earl Losier and Thomas Losier, both of Terre Haute; Donale Losier of Ligonier, Ind.; and Orville Losier of Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo.; six brothers, George, Mike, Charles and Anthony, all of Terre Haute; Bert Jr. of Farmersburg, and Raymond of Indianapolis; three sisters, Mrs. Helen Strem-lau, Mrs. Josephine Schallaci and Mrs. Mary Anderson, all of Chicago; and the father, Bert Gurchiek Sr. of Terre Haute. He was a member of St. Margaret Mary Church and the Holy Name Society of that church.

**CLAUDE W. PARKER** — The body of Claude W. Parker, 44, of RR 7, was taken to the Thomas Funeral Home pending arrangements. He was a veteran of World War II and a member of William Penn Masonic Lodge and the Krietenstein Post of the American Legion. Surviving are the widow, Opal; a daughter, Rebecca; two sons, Patrick and Michael, all at home; the father, Ernest of RR 7; and three sisters, Mrs. Fred Paige and Mrs. Carl Howard, both of RR 7, and Mrs. Jay Dennis of RR 1, Rosedale.

**WILLIAM E. SCOTT** — The body of William E. Scott, 56, of 2101 Spang avenue, was taken to the Thomas Funeral Home where friends may call after 6 p.m. Saturday and where services will be held at 1 p.m. Monday. The Rev. Neil Kuns will officiate and burial will be in Roselawn Memorial Park. Surviving are the widow, Josephine; a daughter, Mrs. Rosemary Ramsey of Terre Haute; two brothers, Sam and Clarence, both of Terre Haute; three sisters, Mrs. Anna Reilly, Mrs. Katherine Jeffers and Mrs. Elizabeth Gore, all of Terre Haute, and a step-grandson, Wayne Ramsey.

**MAX E. McGAUGHY** — The body of Max E. McGaughy, 33, of 3235 North Fifteenth street, was taken to the Thomas Funeral Home pending arrangements. He was a veteran of World War II. Surviving is the widow, Rose Ann; a daughter, Linda; a son, Danny; the mother, Mrs. Effie McGaughy, and a brother, Jack McGaughy, all of Terre Haute.

**ROBERT L. DAVIS**—The body of Robert L. Davis, 27, of 3122 North Twenty-third street, was taken to the Thomas Funeral Home where friends may call after 6-p.m. Saturday and where services will be held at 11 a.m. Monday. The Rev. William Saunders will officiate and burial will be in Roselawn Memorial Park. He was a member of the First Assembly of God Church. Surviving is the widow, Beverly; two daughters, Sandra Joann and Debra Lynn, both at home; two sons, Robert Michael and Daniel Evan, both at home; the mother, Mrs. Herschel Davis of Terre Haute; three brothers, James R. of Bloomington, Donald and William Herschel, Jr., both of Terre Haute, and a sister, Mrs. Julia Haines of Indianapolis.

**GEORGE SANFORD SMITH**—The body of George Sanford

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Smith, 65, of Fairview Park, was taken to the Frist Funeral Home in Clinton where funeral services will be held at 1:30 o'clock Sunday afternoon. Rev. Joe Baker will officiate with burial in Helts Prairie cemetery. He was a member of the Fairview Park Methodist Church and Jerusalem Lodge No. 99, F&AM at Clinton. Surviving are the widow, Rosa; two daughters, Mrs. James Short of Anderson and Mrs. Dale Smith of Bloomington, Ind.; a son, Dugger Smith of Franklin, Ind.; eight grandchildren; a sister, Mrs. Hazel Hodgson of Bremen, Ohio, and two brothers, Edward Smith of Columbus, Ohio, and John "Cappy" Smith of Clinton.

**JOSEPH SANQUENETTI**—Funeral services for Joseph Sanquenetti, 45, RR 1, Rosedale, will be held Monday at 1:30 p.m. at the Frist Funeral Home at Clinton. He was a member of the Bethlehem EUB Church, Universal, and the Scottish Rite, Terre Haute. He is survived by the wife, Grace; the mother, Rosa; two sons, Joseph Jr., Rosedale, and Wayne, at home; a daughter, Saren; one brother, John, Clinton; five sisters, Mrs. Lillie Magaloni, Mrs. Edith Shanbi, Mrs. Lucille Tsso, Mrs. Virginia Rose Huxford, all of Clinton and Mrs. Vera Stefani, Elmhurst, Ill., and two grandchildren. Burial will be in Roselawn Memorial Park.





**COMFORTS RELATIVE**—The wife of one of the miners trapped underground by the explosion sobs on a friend's shoulder after hearing word that there were no survivors.

Photos by Charles.





**GRIM JOB COMPLETED** as rescue workers bring out the last of 22 charred and mangled bodies to the surface at 7:45 a.m., about four and a half hours after rescue operations began. The last victim brought out was Joseph Sanquenetti, 45, of RR 1, Rosedale.

# Funeral Home Grim Place as Bodies Arrive

*July 3-1961*

The Bedino Chapel of the Valley Mortuary stands at the corner of U. S. 40 and Indiana 150 in the middle of West Terre Haute.

The chapel is a large one, designed to handle five funerals at once. Today it prepared for many more.

Shortly before dawn, relatives of the miners caught in a gas explosion at the Viking began arriving at the chapel, filing past the glassed-in porch with its native stone fountain.

In back, ambulances delivered bodies as they were lifted out of a charred and wrecked shaft of the Viking.

Owner Gilbert Bedino turned over his largest room to the corner so the bodies could be laid in two rows on white and green sheets and wives and families could walk between the rows.

## Coroner Checks List.

The coroner, Dr. D. M. Ferguson, checked a master list against metal belt tags and numbers stamped on battery-powered helmet lights.

Ferguson began practice 12 years ago and is no stranger to mine disasters or Vigo county. This was the "most horrible sight I've ever seen," he said.

What Ferguson called a "violent type concussion explosion" tore away limbs and obliterated faces. It froze one victim's hand on front of his face as he tried to ward it off.



# Funeral Home Grim Place as Bodies Arrive

Continued From Page One.

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It turned billfolds into legacies. One wallet contained \$700. Another carried 24 \$100 bills. A package of cigarettes in a pocket was not burned. Its owner's face was charred beyond recognition.

Ferguson said he understood federal mine officials were on their way from Washington to investigate the disaster.

Community Affairs File

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TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA





# EXPLOSION AT VIKING MINE KILLS 22; BODIES RECOVERED

## Victims Trapped And Die in Tracks Following Blast

By JOHN POTISEK

The last of 22 miners whose lives were snuffed out in a single instant Thursday night at the Viking Coal Co. mine near here was brought to the surface at 7:45 a.m. Friday.

There was a violent explosion sometime last night about two and a half miles from the main shaft along the maze of entries and tunnels of the vast operation.

The exact time of the blast was unknown. Some think it happened as early as 7:45 p.m. when an air pressure

(Page of Mine Disaster Pictures on Page 8).

gauge on the surface dropped to zero. An official attempted to telephone the miners and got no response to his repeated rings.

The disaster ranks as the second worst in Indiana mining history. It is only surpassed by the 1925 explosion in a Sullivan county mine, where 56 miners met death.

The last body was returned to the surface about four and a half hours after the initial victim was found. A

morque was set up at the Bedino Chapel of the Valley where the bodies were taken in either Bedino or Frank M. Patrick J. Ryan ambulances. By midmorning Friday, all the bodies had been taken to other funeral homes, except two which will remain there for final rites.

The explosion apparently killed the men in their tracks, according to rescuers.

"They fell where they were working at the time of the explosion," said R. E. Hudson of

Rosedale, a state mine inspector who joined the rescue crews. "Only a couple tried to crawl," Hudson said.

22 Are Unhurt.

Only one body could be recognized by the features. The other charred and mangled bodies were identified by the belt numbers.

Twenty-two other miners working in another section were unhurt and ordered to the surface immediately.

Initial reconstruction of the explosion places the point of the blast about two and a half miles down an entry, headed north



GRIM JOB COMPLETED as rescue workers bring out the last of 22 charred and mangled bodies to the surface at 7:45 a.m., about four and a half hours after rescue operations began. The last victim brought out was Joseph Sanquenet, 45, of RR 1, Rosedale.



COMFORTS RELATIVE—The wife of one of the miners trapped underground by the explosion sobs on a friend's shoulder after hearing word that there were no survivors. Photos by Charles.

## ARREST SEVEN MORE IN AUTO FRAUD

### Fatality

### Fatality List

(Obituary Notices on Page 14).

Here are the names of the 22 miners killed in an explosion in the Viking Mine Thursday:

Joseph Sanquenet, 45, RR 1, Rosedale.

Joseph Stultz, 49, Sullivan.

Roy Stout, 37, Shelburn.

James Turley, 55, RR 1, Farmersburg.

C. Burl Gummere, 53, 1115 Mary Lane, Terre Haute.

William Gatti, 87, 2901 Lafayette avenue, Terre Haute.

James L. Norton, 28, RR 1, West Terre Haute.

Amil Pettit, 34, RR 1, Shelburn.

John M. Randall, 62, RR 1, Rosedale.

Claude Parker, 44, RR 7, Terre Haute.

George S. Smith, 59, RR 1, Clinton.

Clarence Chubb, 37, Hymera.

David C. Hale, 40, RR 2, Linton.

Robert Davis, 27, 3122 North Twenty-third street, Terre Haute.

George Hill Jr., 54, Sullivan.

Thomas Gurchick, 52, 1803 Margaret avenue, Terre Haute.

Jack Gummere, 31, 1533 South Eighth street, Terre Haute.

Max McGaughey, 34, 3235 North Fifteenth street, Terre Haute.

William Scott, 56, 2101 Spang avenue, Terre Haute.

Elmo Ranard, 54, Dugger.

Chester Gardner, 34, Fontanel.

Wallace Rippey, 58, 1116 South Fourth street, Terre Haute.

Dust Was Terrible

### Victim's Brother On Rescue Team

EDITOR'S NOTE—Miner John Sanquenet, 41, was at work in the Viking mine when an explosion in another part of the mine sealed off his brother, Joe, 45, and 21 other miners. John was among the first to re-enter the mine with rescue crews. Here is his story.

By JOHN SANQUENET

As Told to United Press International

I was working about three miles from the explosion and I didn't know what had happened until I came up.

I went straight back down with a probing crew. The dust and smoke were so bad you couldn't breathe.

To get to the men you had to push air in front of you. First you rig up ventilators—the other ones were knocked out in the explosion—and then you push air and gas in front of you, like a horsehoe so it circles around and out.

It looked like a tomb. Everything was charred and black and covered with coal dust. The explosion was so strong it knocked out cement and wooden ventilators. It knocked coal moles and shuttle cars and roof support drills all over the place.

A mile away the heat melted one-eighth inch plastic insulation on a trolley wire.

The explosion covered about a quarter of a mile, from the center to its edges. Just gas wouldn't have been so wide. But it kicked

Continued On Page 9, Column 5.

Clinton Miner Missed Disaster Due to Illness

Linton, Mo. Fisher, 46, Clinton looked at the mine shaft and walked away slowly.

"It's worked," he said, "I'd be dead. They've already found the men where I'd have been working."

Fisher said he didn't work in the Viking Coal mine yesterday because his doctor had ordered him to take a week off.

Theory on Blast.

Fisher said he had figured out what caused the explosion that killed 22 miners in the shaft.

"They were working over an old shaft. The shaft was about 150 feet below the one we were mining in. Gas seeped up to our shaft and was ignited by some kind of spark."

There were other miners who missed the explosion by some sort of coincidence.

Norman Price of West Terre Haute was sent to the other side of the mine—where 22 miners escaped the explosion—shortly before the blast.

Spat Saved Him.

Another miner—who wouldn't give his name—said he missed the explosion because of a spat with his wife.

His soldier son had been visiting them and the miner had planned to go to work while his wife took the son to the airport in Indianapolis, 90 miles away.

But the wife didn't fix the miner's sandwiches to take to work.

The miner got sore at her, decided to drive to Indianapolis with the boy himself—and lived. It was later learned the man was Robert Forbes of Shelburn.

### The Weather

By U. S. Weather Bureau

4 a.m. 40 Noon 58  
5 a.m. 45 3 p.m. 62  
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6 p.m. 110 6 p.m. 64  
7 p.m. 115 9 p.m. 64  
8 p.m. 120 12 p.m. 64  
9 p.m. 125 3 p.m. 64  
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10 a.m. 1810 6 p.m. 64  
11 a.m. 1815 9 p.m. 64  
12 p.m. 1820 12 p.m. 64  
1 p.m. 1825 3 p.m. 64  
2 p.m. 1830 6 p.m. 64  
3 p.m. 1835 9 p.m. 64  
4 a.m. 1840 12 p.m. 64  
5 a.m. 1845 3 p.m. 64  
6 a.m. 1850 6 p.m. 64  
7 a.m. 1855 9 p.m. 64  
8 a.m. 1860 12 p.m. 64  
9 a.m. 1865 3 p.m. 64  
10 a.m. 1870 6 p.m. 64  
11 a.m. 1875 9 p.m. 64  
12 p.m. 1880 12 p.m. 64  
1 p.m. 1885 3 p.m. 64  
2 p.m. 1890 6 p.m. 64  
3 p.m. 1895 9 p.m. 64  
4 a.m. 1900 12 p.m. 64  
5 a.m. 1905 3 p.m. 64  
6 a.m. 1910 6 p.m. 64  
7 a.m. 1915 9 p.m. 64  
8 a.m. 1920 12 p.m. 64  
9 a.m. 1925 3 p.m. 64  
10 a.m. 1930 6 p.m. 64  
11 a.m. 1935 9 p.m. 64  
12 p.m. 1940 12 p.m. 64  
1 p.m. 1945 3 p.m. 64  
2 p.m. 1950 6 p.m. 64  
3 p.m. 1955 9 p.m. 64  
4 a.m. 1960 12 p.m. 64  
5 a.m. 1965 3 p.m. 64  
6 a.m. 1970 6 p.m. 64  
7 a.m. 1975 9 p.m. 64  
8 a.m. 1980 12 p.m. 64  
9 a.m. 1985 3 p.m. 64  
10 a.m. 1990 6 p.m. 64  
11 a.m. 1995 9 p.m. 64  
12 p.m. 2000 12 p.m. 64  
1 p.m. 2005 3 p.m. 64  
2 p.m. 2010 6 p.m. 64  
3 p.m. 2015 9 p.m. 64  
4 a.m. 2020 12 p.m. 64  
5 a.m. 2025 3 p.m. 64  
6 a.m. 2030 6 p.m. 64  
7 a.m. 2035 9 p.m. 64  
8 a.m. 2040 12 p.m. 64  
9 a.m. 2045 3 p.m. 64  
10 a.m. 2050 6 p.m. 64  
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1 p.m. 2065 3 p.m. 64  
2 p.m. 2070 6 p.m. 64  
3 p.m. 2075 9 p.m. 64  
4 a.m. 2080 12 p.m. 64  
5 a.m. 2085 3 p.m. 64  
6 a.m. 2090 6 p.m. 64  
7 a.m. 2095 9 p.m. 64  
8 a.m. 2100 12 p.m. 64  
9 a.m. 2105 3 p.m. 64  
10 a.m. 2110 6 p.m. 64  
11 a.m. 2115 9 p.m. 64  
12 p.m. 2120 12 p.m. 64  
1 p.m. 2125 3 p.m. 64  
2 p.m. 2130 6 p.m. 64  
3 p.m. 2135 9 p.m. 64  
4 a.m. 2140 12 p.m. 64  
5 a.m. 2145 3 p.m. 64  
6 a.m. 2150 6 p.m. 64  
7 a.m. 2155 9 p.m.



## 22 Are Killed In Explosion At Viking Mine

Continued From Page One.

son would suffer under prolonged burning, he added.

Wallace Rippy, 58, Terre Haute, one of those killed probably was leading the men, the coroner said. In his pockets were maps, a ball of cord and a notebook which showed the location of the men.

"Were there any scorchings he may have jotted down at the last moment?" the coroner was asked.

"There wouldn't have been time," he replied.

The scene was illuminated by two or three spotlights and some 200 persons stood in the dark and cold outside the rope barrier manned by Indiana State Police.

They stood staring at the mine shaft, seeing nothing and finding no words to speak. They just showed a daze of horror.

The story of what happened in that entry last night is yet to unfold.

**Plan Investigation.**

Burch Brooks, vice president and general manager, issued a statement Friday morning that an investigation would start immediately.

"An investigation will be held Saturday morning at the mine starting at 8:30 o'clock by James Westfield, assistant director of the Federal Bureau of Mines, and Charles Purcell, State Director of Mines. Others to take part include Charles Ferguson, safety director of the United Mine Workers of America, insurance personnel, and company officials."

Westfield and UMW's Ferguson arrived here at 6 a.m. in preparation for the investigation. Meanwhile, in Washington, D. C., Bureau of Mines Director Marling J. Ankney said the mine had been inspected by bureau officials last December. He said all "disaster hazards discovered had been corrected by the time the inspection was completed."

The mine in question was a "gassy mine," which Ankney said required three inspections a year. He explained that most big mines are "gassy" and certain special precautions are necessary.

Brooks statement expressed gratitude to all those that helped in the rescue operation, state police, the sheriff's department, the Vigo Civil Defense units, and the Red Cross, and the Salvation Army whose representatives were on the scene all night.

The mine will remain closed until after the investigation, according to Brooks. The investigation is expected to last several days. Hoopes are the mine will be back in operation in a week or ten days.

The men, who made up half of the shift at the time of the explosion, were assigned to two loading machines deep in the mine.

"We lost 22 fine men," Brooks said.

**No Fault with Shaft.**

Homer Parks of West Terre Haute, a day shift miner, said "I don't think there could have been anything wrong with the shaft they were in. They must have hit an old shaft which had formed in it. They used to mine other shafts here years ago." Company officials privately agreed with his theory.

Parks had rushed from home to help in the rescue effort.

"I know every man down there," he said. "By neighbors across the street is one of them. They're all family men. It's real hard going to be tough."

Clyde Weaver of Bank, an electrician, was with the crew that escaped the blast.

"We didn't even know what happened," Weaver said. "I didn't hear a thing. They called down and told us to get out but gave us no indication that anything was wrong. We hurried out as quick as possible."

**Generated Terrible Heat.**

The heat generated by the blast was so intense it melted plastic insulation on trillies wires a mile from the center of the affected area. Heat and gas drove back the first rescue crew to enter the dust and smoke-filled tunnels.

They donned gas masks and as surface crews labored to police the area after ambulances, families, rescue teams, company and mine officials and scores of other anxious persons had left the scene, three miners' dinner pails were seen sitting beside the idle conveyor, the last on-the-scene link to the lives that had been snuffed out within the mine.

Covered with dust, dented and puffed out, they bore evidence of the heat that had been generated by the force of the explosion. A memento key chain attached to one read "Linton Open House."

One of the pails displayed a label which read "Safe Today. Alive Tomorrow. Carbonyl Mining Tools."

**JOINS KHRUSHCHEV ON SIBERIAN TRIP**

LONDON, March 2. — Soviet government organ Izvestia, cut short a visit to Britain today and left for Moscow to join his father-in-law, Premier Khrushchev, on a trip to Siberia. Soviet Embassy officials did not disclose the purpose of the visit.

## Great Mine Disasters

NEW YORK, March 3. — Mine disasters have claimed thousands of lives since man began digging deep into the earth for coal.

The greatest single catastrophe on record occurred April 26, 1942, in Japanese-occupied Manchuria. A series of tremendous explosions took 1,549 lives.

Some of the other major ones and their death tolls were:

Sept. 20, 1960 — Kyushu, Japan, 67.

Feb. 22, 1960 — Zwickau, East Germany, 122.

Jan. 21, 1960 — Coalbrook, South Africa, 417.

Sept. 18, 1959 — Kirtintilloch, Scotland, 47.

Oct. 23, 1958 — Springfield, Nova Scotia, 75.

Feb. 19, 1958 — Asansol, India, 218.

Aug. 8, 1956 — Marcinelle, Belgium, 263.

Dec. 22, 1954 — West Frankfort, Ill., 119.

Aug. 14, 1947 — Whitehaven, England, 191.

March 25, 1937 — Centralia, Ill., 111.

May 18, 1928 — Mather, Pa., 185.

Oct. 22, 1913 — Dawson, N. M., 63.

Dec. 6, 1907 — Monongah, W. Va., 361.

State recovered two bodies. State Police Capt. Rufus Finney repeated Friday that "all 22 miners are dead" and Brooks repeated there was little chance anyone was alive.

But rescue workers continued their fight against deadly carbon monoxide gas and the threat of new rock falls to find the missing.

**Rescue Teams on Job.**

Six full time rescue crews, including several Green Valley Mine employees and also some from Bicknell from the Lynch Reciprocal Coal Operators Association disaster crew, were working on a rotating basis battling intense smoke in an effort to reach the other trapped men.

Two carloads of rock dust were brought in to spread over the area to prevent another explosion.

The Viking Mine was not considered a dangerous one from standpoint of gas. Precautions were taken to minimize the dust hazard. It had established a record of no fatalities between 1947 and 1957, and there had been only one fatality in the mine's history.

It has a labyrinth of tunnels five miles beneath the surface of the county in all it employs 220 miners.

The mine is in operation around the clock to supply fuel for the nearby Wabash power plant of the Public Service Co. of Indiana.

mine disasters have claimed more than 1,800 lives in Indiana since 1888.

The worst Hoosier mine disaster on record occurred on Feb. 20, 1925, with 56 persons killed in the City Coal Co. mine near Sullivan.

Other major ones before the explosion in which 22 men were killed near Terre Haute Friday night—and their death tolls—were:

April 30, 1947 — Spring Hill Mine, Terre Haute, 8.

May 22, 1941 — Panhandle Mine, near Bicknell, 14.

July 15, 1937 — Baker Mine, northeast of Sullivan, 20.

Jan. 29, 1931 — Little Begg Mine, Sullivan County, 29.

December 9, 1926 — Francisco Mine, Gibson County, 37.

## Express Theory On Explosion

Continued From Page One.

son reportedly were working on the same level but in the area that ran in the opposite direction off the shaft. Length of the area in which they were working "runs about two miles back into the vein," one mine employee said.

As surface crews labored to police the area after ambulances, families, rescue teams, company and mine officials and scores of other anxious persons had left the scene, three miners' dinner pails were seen sitting beside the idle conveyor, the last on-the-scene link to the lives that had been snuffed out within the mine.

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## Wabash Valley Flood Control Backed By Kerr

MT. CARMEL, Ill., March 3. — Sen. Robert S. Kerr (D-Okla.) sold the Wabash Valley Association today that "with hard work the Wabash Valley can catch up to its need in flood projects."

In remarks prepared for the annual meeting of the association, Kerr said flood control progress made in his own state in the past decade should serve as an example to the Wabash Valley.

He called for bipartisan support of the Indiana and Illinois congressional delegations for the Wabash Basin water resources interagency commission bill. The measure was introduced recently by Sen. Vance Hartke (D-Ind.) who introduced Kerr.

Kerr said it takes determined effort of congressional representatives and local groups to push vital water resources measures to completion. He said Hartke's bill "will place the planning resources of all agencies involved directly at your disposal."

Kerr said the \$271 million estimated cost of Wabash Valley development was "relatively modest."

**VICES FOR WRECK VICTIM IN CHICAGO**

Services for Eugene R. O'Hara, 41-year-old manager of the American Optical Company, 819 Ohio street, who died Thursday in an auto wreck are tentatively set for 1 o'clock Saturday afternoon at the Bilger Funeral Home in Chicago.

Burial also will be in Chicago. The body was transferred to the Bilger Chapel in Chicago from the Callahan Funeral Home Thursday night. O'Hara resided at 2800 Idaho street.

O'Hara, who was manager of the American Optical Company, 819 Ohio street, had visited a number of cities in Illinois on business Wednesday and was returning home, deputies said, at the time of the wreck.

## VOTE MINE FUNDS BEFORE DISASTER

State Senator Jack H. Mankin succeeded in adding \$17,040 to the appropriation for the State Bureau of Mines and Mine Rescue Station as the Indiana Senate acted on the state budget Thursday night.

Less than an hour after Mankin won approval of his amendment, he learned of the explosion which killed 22 men in the Viking Mine.

## DEATHS

**MRS. IRENE TYLER JACKSON**

Mrs. Irene Tyler Jackson, 53 years old, of 720 Walnut street, died at 8 o'clock Thursday evening at Union Hospital. Surviving are the husband, Robert, and two sisters, Mrs. Ruth Coburn of Ellettsville, and several nieces and nephews. The funeral will be at 10 o'clock Saturday morning at the Callahan Funeral Home, where friends may call. Burial will be at 1 o'clock Saturday afternoon at Crown Hill cemetery in Indianapolis.

**WILLIAM L. CUNTER**

Services for William L. Cunter, 64 years old, of 2301 North 10th street, died at 10 o'clock Saturday afternoon at St. Anthony's Hospital. Surviving are the wife, Mrs. Mary Cunter, and several children. The funeral will be at 10 o'clock Saturday afternoon at the Callahan Funeral Home, where friends may call. Burial will be at 1 o'clock Sunday morning at Crown Hill cemetery in Indianapolis.

**MRS. ETHEL S. ROCKWELL**

Mrs. Ethel S. Rockwell, 89, of 1804 1/2th Avenue, died Friday morning at St. Anthony's Hospital. She was a member of the Trinity Methodist Church. The funeral will be at 10 o'clock Saturday afternoon at the Callahan Funeral Home, where friends may call. Burial will be at 1 o'clock Sunday morning at Crown Hill cemetery in Indianapolis.

**TIMOTHY WAGLE**

Timothy Wagle, 14-year-old son of Timothy Wagle, died at 10 o'clock Saturday afternoon at St. Anthony's Hospital. He was a member of the First Christian Church. The funeral will be at 10 o'clock Sunday morning at the Callahan Funeral Home, where friends may call. Burial will be at 1 o'clock Sunday afternoon at Crown Hill cemetery in Indianapolis.

**ERD P. KRAMMER**

Erhard P. Krammer, 75 years old, of 1004 North 1st street, died Friday morning at St. Anthony's Hospital. He was a member of the First Christian Church. The funeral will be at 10 o'clock Saturday afternoon at the Callahan Funeral Home, where friends may call. Burial will be at 1 o'clock Sunday morning at Crown Hill cemetery in Indianapolis.

**MRS. GLADYS L. JOHNSON**

Services for Mrs. Gladys L. Johnson, 50 years old, of 2448 Washington street, died at 10 o'clock Saturday afternoon at the Callahan Funeral Home, where friends may call. Burial will be at 1 o'clock Sunday morning at Crown Hill cemetery in Indianapolis.

**MRS. MARY M. KERR**

Services for Mrs. Mary M. Kerr, 75 years old, of 2243 Second Avenue, died at 10 o'clock Saturday morning at the Callahan Funeral Home, where friends may call. Burial will be at 1 o'clock Sunday morning at Crown Hill cemetery in Indianapolis.

**MRS. WILHELMINA OWENS**

Services for Mrs. Wilhelmina Owens, 75 years old, of 1004 North 1st street, died Friday morning at St. Anthony's Hospital. She was a member of the First Christian Church. The funeral will be at 10 o'clock Saturday afternoon at the Callahan Funeral Home, where friends may call. Burial will be at 1 o'clock Sunday morning at Crown Hill cemetery in Indianapolis.

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**TERRE HAUTE COMMERCIAL COLLEGE**

Wabash at 5th Ter. Side

Hamilton, 43 years old, of 818 North Fifth street, who died Wednesday, will be at 10 o'clock Saturday morning at the Moore & Kirk Northeast Chapel at Indianapolis. Graveside services will be at 1 o'clock Saturday afternoon in Highland Lawn cemetery.

**WILLIAM F. CHERSEKAL**

Services for William F. Chersikal, 30 years old, of 2301 North 10th street, died at 10 o'clock Saturday afternoon at the Callahan Funeral Home, where friends may call. Burial will be at 1 o'clock Sunday morning at Crown Hill cemetery in Indianapolis.

**MRS. SOPHIA G. BEELING**

Services for Mrs. Sophia G. Beeling, 64 years old, of 2301 North 10th street, died at 10 o'clock Saturday afternoon at the Callahan Funeral Home, where friends may call. Burial will be at 1 o'clock Sunday morning at Crown Hill cemetery in Indianapolis.

**FRANK M. BUGHES**

Services for Frank M. Bughes, 55 years old, of 811 North Center street, died at 10 o'clock Saturday afternoon at the Callahan Funeral Home, where friends may call. Burial will be at 1 o'clock Sunday morning at Crown Hill cemetery in Indianapolis.

**MRS. CARNE ROGERS**

Services for Mrs. Carne Rogers, 55 years old, of 811 North Center street, died at 10 o'clock Saturday afternoon at the Callahan Funeral Home, where friends may call. Burial will be at 1 o'clock Sunday morning at Crown Hill cemetery in Indianapolis.

**EMMETT O. NAVIGANT**

Services for Emmett O. Navigant, 41 years old, of 811 North Center street, died at 10 o'clock Saturday afternoon at the Callahan Funeral Home, where friends may call. Burial will be at 1 o'clock Sunday morning at Crown Hill cemetery in Indianapolis.

**MRS. EMMA REED KNOX**

Services for Mrs. Emma Reed Knox, 55 years old, of 811 North Center street, died at 10 o'clock Saturday afternoon at the Callahan Funeral Home, where friends may call. Burial will be at 1 o'clock Sunday morning at Crown Hill cemetery in Indianapolis.

**NO BANDERS**

Services for Mrs. Emma Reed Knox, 55 years old, of 811 North Center street, died at 10 o'clock Saturday afternoon at the Callahan Funeral Home, where friends may call. Burial will be at 1 o'clock Sunday morning at Crown Hill cemetery in Indianapolis.

**MARTINSVILLE, Ill., March 3.** — (Special) — Robert Williams, 65-year-old Martinsville resident, died at 7:30 o'clock Thursday morning at the Paris Hospital. Surviving are the widow, Catherine, five daughters, Miss Mary Katherine Sanders of Paris, Mrs. Marie Lee of Marshall, Mrs. Lillie Savits of Kintnersville, Tenn., Mrs. Mildred Stotts of Compton, Cal., and Mrs. Linda Shelton of Marshall, Mo. Burial will be at 1 o'clock Saturday afternoon at the Callahan Funeral Home, where friends may call. Burial will be at 1 o'clock Sunday morning at Crown Hill cemetery in Indianapolis.

**MRS. SYLVIA V. McCAMMON**

Services for Mrs. Sylvia V. McCammon, 55 years old, of 811 North Center street, died at 10 o'clock Saturday afternoon at the Callahan Funeral Home, where friends may call. Burial will be at 1 o'clock Sunday morning at Crown Hill cemetery in Indianapolis.

**MRS. ALBERT ROGERS**

Services for Mrs. Albert Rogers, 55 years old, of 811 North Center street, died at 10 o'clock Saturday afternoon at the Callahan Funeral Home, where friends may call. Burial will be at 1 o'clock Sunday morning at Crown Hill cemetery in Indianapolis.

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## Funeral Home Grim Place as Bodies Arrive

Continued From Page One.

metal belt tags and numbers stamped on battery-powered helmet lights.

Ferguson began practice 12 years ago and is no stranger to mine disasters or Vigo county. This was the "most horrible sight I've ever seen," he said.

What Ferguson called a "violent type concussion explosion" tore away limbs and obliterated faces. It froze one victim's hand in front of his face as he tried to ward it off.

He turned billboards into local cities. One wallet contained \$700. Another carried 24 \$100 bills. A package of cigarettes in a pocket was charred beyond recognition.

Ferguson said he understood federal mine officials were on their way from Washington to investigate the disaster.

Three daughters, Mrs. Shirley Schwartz of Anderson, Ind., and Misses Carolyn Williams of Charleston and Sharon Williams of Ellettsville, both at home in Martinsville, and two brothers, Roy Williams of Roseburg, Ill., and Harold Williams of Akron, Ohio, were expected to arrive at 12:30 p.m. Saturday afternoon at the Callahan Funeral Home at 10 o'clock Saturday morning.

**MRS. EMMA REED KNOX**

Services for Mrs. Emma Reed Knox, 55 years old, of 811 North Center street, died at 10 o'clock Saturday afternoon at the Callahan Funeral Home, where friends may call. Burial will be at 1 o'clock Sunday morning at Crown Hill cemetery in Indianapolis.

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Marie Lee of Marshall, Mrs. Lillie Savits of Kintnersville, Tenn., Mrs. Mildred Stotts of Compton, Cal., and Mrs. Linda Shelton of Marshall, Mo. Burial will be at 1 o'clock Saturday afternoon at the Callahan Funeral Home, where friends may call. Burial will be at 1 o'clock Sunday morning at Crown Hill cemetery in Indianapolis.

**RICHARD STEVEN FOX**

Services for Richard Steven Fox, 16 years old, formerly of Clinton, who was found dead of gunshot wounds at 10:30 o'clock Wednesday night at his home in Peoria, will be at 10 o'clock Saturday morning at the Welch & Corbett Funeral Home in Peoria. Friends may call at the funeral home after 3 o'clock Saturday afternoon. Burial will be in the Peoria cemetery.

**MRS. NELLIE H. LLOYD**

Services for Mrs. Nellie H. Lloyd, 68, of 1004 North 1st street, died at 10 o'clock Saturday afternoon at the Callahan Funeral Home, where friends may call. Burial will be at 1 o'clock Sunday morning at Crown Hill cemetery in Indianapolis.

**MRS. NELLIE H. LLOYD**

Services for Mrs. Nellie H. Lloyd, 68, of 1004 North 1st street, died at 10 o'clock Saturday afternoon at the Callahan Funeral Home, where friends may call. Burial will be at 1 o'clock Sunday morning at Crown Hill cemetery in Indianapolis.

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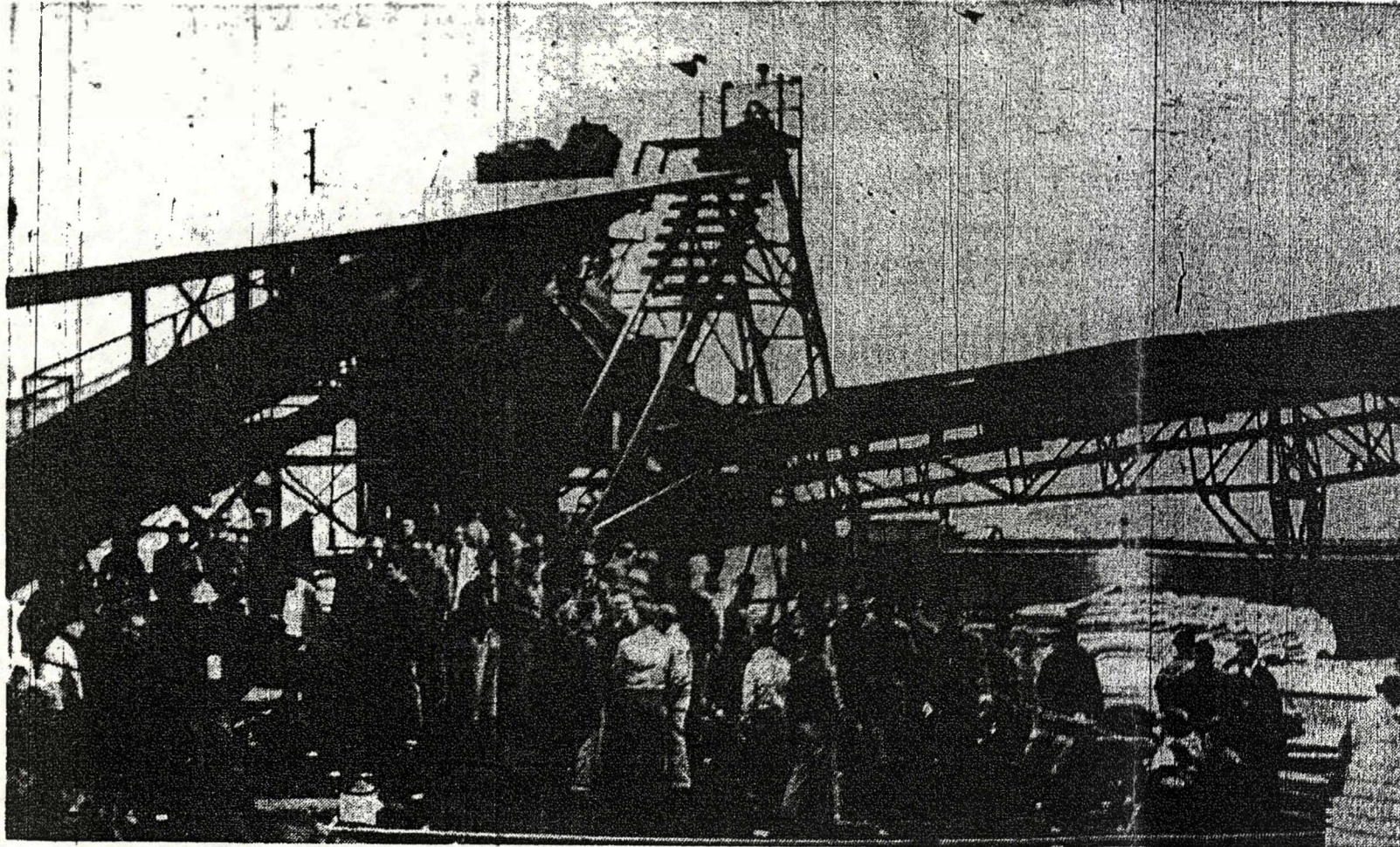
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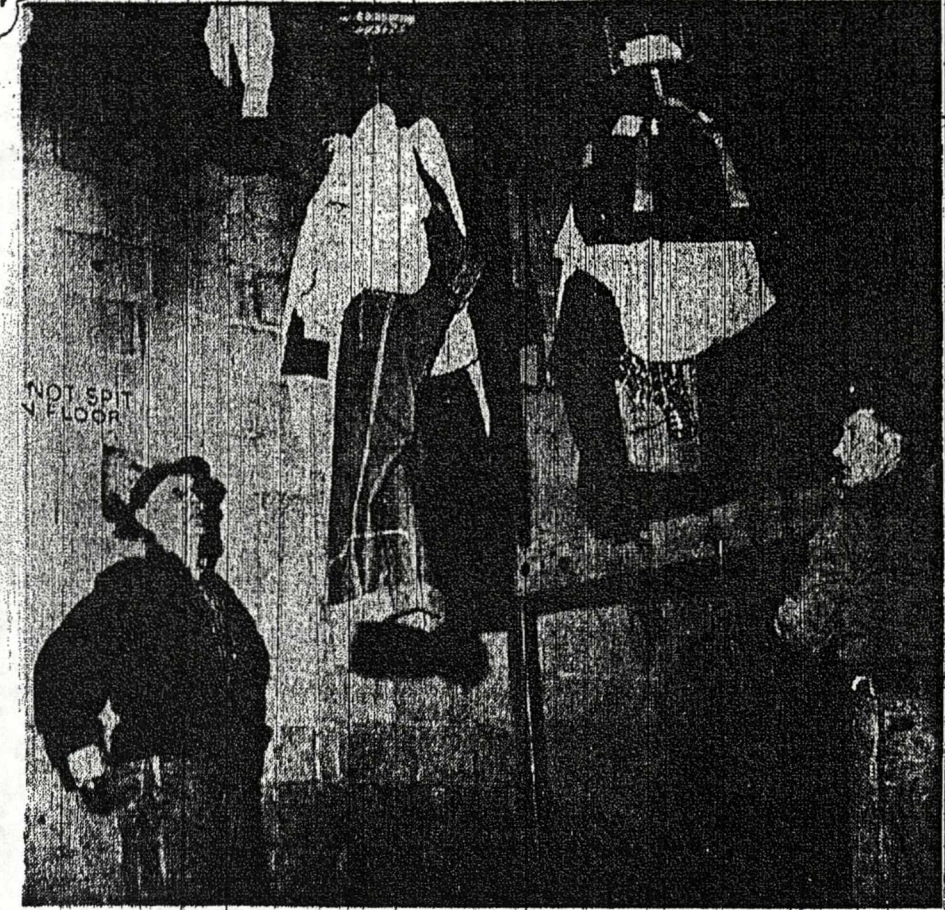
Services for Mrs. Nellie H. Lloyd, 68, of 1004 North 1st street, died at 10 o'clock



# Picture Story of Blast By Tribune Cameramen



A BIG CROWD BUT MOSTLY SILENT—Miners, rescue workers, and sullen relatives of the victims mill around the shaft of the Viking Coal Co. mine about eight miles northwest of Terre Haute.



Others Have to Call for Their Clothes

A FATHER'S DUTY—An unidentified father of a victim reports to the washhouse to claim his son's clothing a short time after the body was brought to the surface.

Photos by Charles.

## The Grim Work of the Mine Explosion Hidden Beneath the Burlap Sacks



SIGNAL OF DEATH—A stretcher covered by a dust-covered blanket indicated another dead victim had been found, as rescuers emerge to the surface. In the center background is Dr. D. M. Ferguson, Vigo County coroner.

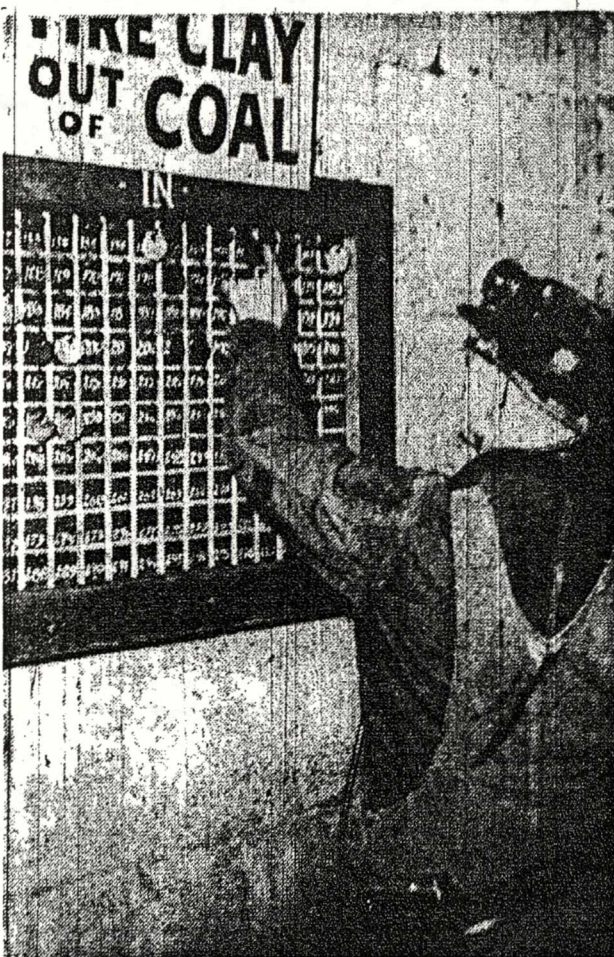


SCENE REPEATED 22 TIMES—Rescue workers lift the covered body of the coal miner from a mine car. In all, 22 dead miners were recovered by 8 a.m. Friday at the Viking mine northwest of Terre Haute.

## Minutes Seem Like Hours As Relatives Wait



A GRIM VIGIL—Sullen, black stares like these easily identified those who lost loved ones in the mine. Miss Johanna Gummere, at left, lost a father and brother. Burl, 53, and Jack, 31.



INITIAL CASUALTY COUNT—This wall chart gave the first indications of how many miners were in the mine at the time of the explosion. Each miner leaves his metal tab over his number as he gets ready to descend.



PIN-POINTS TRAGEDY—Phil Jones, a miner, uses huge wall map to show news-men the spot of the explosion which wiped out the lives of 22 miners Thursday night. Jones was scheduled to go to work this morning.

## Expressions of Awe, Clutched Hands Depict the Tenseness of the Crowd



HUNDREDS GATHER AT TRAGEDY SCENE—The rope keeps back the curious crowd that gathered at the scene as soon as word of the explosion was reported by news media in the middle of the night.



# Mine Blaze Is Quickly Halted At Green Valley

*Int. Star - Nov 26, 1961*

A fire about a half-mile from the base of the main entry to the Green Valley Mine was quickly doused with water Saturday evening. The shaft is located west of St. Mary-of-the-Woods village.

A spokesman for the company said the fire broke out about 6 p.m. on a conveyor belt but he could not say what caused the blaze.

Damage was described as "limited" and the mine was expected to be in operation Monday.

Since the mine doesn't operate on weekends, there were only three or four men in the mine at the time of the fire, which was discovered by Leo Martin, a hoisting engineer.

The company spokesman said that no lives were endangered at any time.

## Crew Is Complimented.

He complimented the fast work of the men in putting out the blaze. There was an ample supply of water to fight the blaze, since a line runs parallel to the belt. Several fire extinguishers were nearby, too.

About 20 men were called in to help fight the blaze, according to the company spokesman. The men were called from their homes as soon as the fire was discovered.



Community Affairs File

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# STRIP MINING IS A VAST INDUSTRY

Something About the Newer Process of Producing Coal As  
4 Worked In This Section.

25/26/42 COAL (IN)

Bruce MacCormick.

Mining by the process of stripping the overburden from a vein of coal is the oldest form of coal mining, and it is possible that primitive man discovered the properties of coal when he built a fire on an outcropping and was amazed to see the "black rock" burn. Certainly the explorers of the middle west first came upon coal where it outcropped from the earth, and the first coal mined in Indiana was obtained by stripping.

The state's coal production dates from 1825, when Alpha Frisbee began to strip the overburden from an outcropping vein of coal on Little Pigeon Creek. Early miners used hand shovels and horse drawn scrapers to uncover the coal, and some coal is still produced in Indiana by this simple method, without mechanical assistance.

In these early mines, as the overburden increased in depth, slopes were driven into the hillsides, and underground mining was then practiced. Twenty-five years after coal was first mined, the first shaft in Indiana was sunk, and deep mining superseded stripping operations to a large extent, although the power shovel was being used as early as 1877 for removing the overburden from seams of coal.

In 1918, when a group of strip mine operators formed the Indiana Coal Producers Association, more than 1,000,000 tons were being produced in Indiana annually by stripping methods. Last year, the members of the association, which has maintained headquarters in Terre Haute since its formation, produced more than 10,000,000 tons of coal by stripping. Today giant shovels, powered by steam, electricity or Diesel engines, literally move mountains to uncover veins of coal which cannot be economically mined by shaft operations. The local fields are counted among the country's largest producers by stripping methods.

The huge shovels are familiar sights to motorists in this vicinity, where some of the biggest power shovels in the world are engaged in mining coal. Strip mine properties are producing millions of tons of coal which today more than ever merits the name "black diamonds," because of the vital part the fuel plays in the industrial war effort.

Coal which is mined by strip, or open cut, methods is not within the economical reach of underground mining. Layers of earth, slate and rock immediately on top of the coal are often so thin and friable that the cost of timbering to support the roof and ground above would be prohibitive. In addition, many of the seams of coal uncovered are three feet or less in thickness, making it impractical to mine by any other method than stripping.

The United States Bureau of Mines has pointed out that strip mining is "a means of preventing waste of a natural resource which cannot be replaced," because the method produces coal from veins which could not be mined otherwise, and also because open cut mining permits recovery of practically all of the coal deposit.

Operators producing coal by open cut mining in Indiana met at Indianapolis Jan. 8, 1918, preparatory to forming an organization, which was given the name of Indiana Coal Producers Association. A leader in the formation of the association was Frank Richards of Terre Haute, who was the first president. Associated with him were Thomas Hasket, George Rowland, Ira Aten, Walter S. McCloud, Samuel Ashby, C. C. Hustis, R. A. Chapman, M. E. Moog and A. C. Reitz, representing companies active in the coal field as well as operators of more southern properties in the state.

The first and only secretary of the association is Michael Scollard, who resigned as chief mine inspector of Indiana to assume the office of secretary July 1, 1918. Offices were first established at 221 South Sixth street in Terre Haute, later being moved to the Grand Opera House Building. Mr. Scollard has been associated with Indiana coal mining for 58 years, in many capacities since he started working in the deep mines as a boy. He was later deputy state mine inspector for four years and chief mine inspector for a like time, his term of office as chief inspector including the war period when 28,000 miners were engaged in producing more than 30 million tons of coal in the state.

## Restoring The Land.

One of the most interesting and constructive activities of the association is its conservation program, started experimentally about 12 years ago with the planting of trees on stripped properties. During that time more than 11 million trees have been planted on worked areas, and members of the association purchased 1,887,000 trees for planting in 1942. The planting program

is eminently practical,—it is designed to create a great acreage of timbered land, and start a new industry in the production of pulpwood. Likewise it is designed to conserve moisture in areas where many lakes are now beginning to abound as rain falls into abandoned open cuts.

Virtually all of the trees purchased for planting by the association are obtained from the state conservation department. Conservationists agree that the serious lowering of the water table may be curbed by creation of lakes over wide areas, and worked strip mine

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cumulating many acres of water of which cannot run off, but seeps into the earth and adds to the natural reservoir below ground. The planting program has more than an industrial side. Much planting has been done with an eye to recreational possibilities, and the citizens of Linton enjoy a 605-acre pleasure ground reclaimed from strip mine operations. In charge of the conservation program is Harry C. Hyatt, city forester of Cleveland for six years, who joined the association in February, 1940, to systematize and supervise the planting program.

#### Laws On Planting.

The state has recognized the importance of reforesting these worked areas. All strip mine operators are now required by a law of 1941 to plant each year an area equal to the acreage stripped, plus 1 per cent, and to post bond of \$25 per acre which is forfeited if the area is not planted. Planting cannot be done, of course, on land just stripped, as a period must elapse to permit the land to settle, collect moisture and become thoroughly suitable for

Indicative of the progress of open cut mining in Indiana are the increased wages received by the United Mine Workers of America over a period of years. Shovel engineers who received \$125 for a 26-day month in 1914, receive \$258.94 for a 22-day month in 1942. Day men receive \$7 for a seven-hour day this year, compared with a wage of \$2.84 for eight hours in 1914.

Present officers of the Indiana Coal Producers Association are J. B. F. Melville, Indianapolis, president; R. H. Sherwood, Indianapolis, vice president, and Michael Scollard, Terre Haute, secretary. These men with the following make up the executive board: Virgil Kibler, Evansville; H. S. Richards, Boonville, and James T. Cunningham, Indianapolis. Hugh B. Lee of the Maumee Collieries Company, Terre Haute was the previous president of the association.

#### Present Membership.

Twenty-three companies hold membership in the association, operating 23 mines and employing more than 3,300 men. The membership includes the following:

Ayrshire-Patoka Collieries Corporation, Indianapolis; Big Bend Collieries, Inc., Center Point; Black Beauty Coal Corporation, Brazil; Blackfoot Coal Corporation, Evans-

ville; Birch Creek Coal Company, Brazil; Brazil Block Coal & Clay Company, Brazil; Bradway Coal Company, Brazil; Callahan Construction Company and Grafe Coal Company, Brazil; Central Indiana Coal Company, Indianapolis; Dixon Block Coal Company, Clay City; Enos Coal Mining Company, Cleveland; Hickory Grove Coal Mining Corporation, Terre Haute; Lincoln City Coal Company, Terre Haute; Lohr-Young Coal Company, Linton; Mariah Hill Super Block Coal Company, Clay City; Maumee Collieries Company, Terre Haute; Quality Coal Corporation, Brazil; Sherwood-Templeton Coal Company, Linton; Pyramid Coal Corporation, Boonville; Sunlight Coal Company, Boonville, and Tecumseh Coal Corporation, Boonville.

# COAL, FOUNDATION OF INDUSTRY HERE

Plays Large Part In Economic  
Setup of Terre Haute and of  
Wabash Valley.

TRIB 4-19-1942

Bruce McCormick.

Industry is built on coal just as solidly as if the fuel formed the actual foundations of factory buildings. Coal in abundance has been an essential factor in the industrial development of America, for its heat generates most of the power which moves the millions of wheels on which modern life turns; even electric power is largely steam generated. Never has coal been so important as it is today, and, as during the last war, Indiana and Vigo county coal mines are producing millions of tons which will literally make a large part of our war effort possible.

Much of Indiana's production comes from deep mines operated by members of the Indiana Coal Operators Association. Terre Haute, as the headquarters of the association and center of one of the state's big producing fields, has for many years occupied a commanding position in the coal industry, and a great deal of the city's industrial growth, as well as its exceptional transportation facilities, spring from the great coal deposits underlying this region. This area is the home of some of the country's biggest coal companies.

Members of the Shaft Mine Operators' Association, first known as the Indiana Bituminous Coal Operators Association, were prominently identified with the large-scale development of the great coal field of Vigo, Vermillion, Sullivan and Clay counties. The producing effort of their mines reached its supreme height during the first World War when members played an important part in production of coal so vital to the war effort. In 1918, when the total production of bituminous coal was 626 million tons, Indiana mines produced 82 million tons, the largest tonnage in the history of the state. During this war another prodigious effort is being made by members of the association at a time when coal is perhaps more important than it ever has been in the life of the United States.

## First Coal Found.

The discovery of coal in Indiana is credited to a Colonel John Croghan, who noticed coal along the Wabash river in 1763, but the earliest records of coal in the state occur in the field notes of surveyors who ran the township and section lines in the first 10 years of the last century. Coal was first mined by Alpha Frisbee, who stripped from an outcrop on Little Pigeon creek, seven miles east of Newburg and three miles from the Ohio river.

An advertisement of coal for sale made its appearance in a Hoosier paper as early as 1832. Twenty years before that date, Robert Fulton, on his first trip down the Ohio in a steamboat "Orleans," stopped at the town of Fulton, near Cannelton, Perry county, and obtained some coal, either for fuel or as a curiosity. By 1840, coal was regularly mined in many places, mostly for the use of blacksmiths, although some was shipped by flat boat. This coal was mined by stripping or drifting on the outcrop. In 1837 the first charter for mining coal was granted by the legislature to the American Cannel Coal Company, of Cannelton, and in 1850 the first shaft in the state was sunk by John Hutchinson, one mile east of Newburg on the bank of the Ohio river.

The famous block coal of Clay county was first recognized as such about 1851, being noticed in a well, and about the same time block coal was first discovered near Brazil. "Brazil block" was first shipped from Clay county in 1852 by John Weaver and Capt. Ezra Olds, the coal being taken from the bed of Otter creek.

## Progress of Industry.

From that date on mining developed on a large scale quite rapidly, and in 1879 the legislature recognized the growing industry by passing certain laws regulating mining and providing for a mine inspector. Output in that year was more than one million tons. In 1886 the state produced two million tons and stood seventh in the coal producing states. By 1896, annual production had risen to more than four million tons, and the state ranked eighth as a coal producer.

J. W. Landrum and A. D. Scott were the first secretaries of the Indiana Bituminous Coal Operators' Association. From 1902 until 1928 Phil Penna was secretary, and he served the association during a period of great development. He was recognized by the industry, both operators and mine workers

alike, as an authority on collective bargaining agreements in the mining industry, and his imprint on coal mining has proved lasting. As secretary of the association he was one of the leaders in organizing the central competitive field for the negotiation of contracts on wages, hours and working conditions. The agreement reached by this central field, including Indiana, Illinois, Ohio and western Pennsylvania, became the contract adopted by other producing districts. Mr. Penna had been an organizer of the United Mine Workers of America, and when it first came into being he served the union as vice president and international president.

In 1928 Harvey Cartwright became secretary of the association, a position which he now holds. In that year the name of the organization became the Indiana Coal Operators Association. Mr. Cartwright had been an official of the United Mine Workers since April 1, 1921, and served as president of District No. 11 from April 1, 1927, until Dec. 1, 1928, when he resigned to become secretary of the operators' association.

The development of mining in Vigo county and the nearby fields progressed in pace with the state, and local mines were recognized as leaders in the bituminous coal industry not only in the Middle West, but nationally. From the standpoint of modern equipment and methods, as well as tonnage, they have remained well in the foreground.

Operators whose names were prominently connected with development of the local field and the Indiana Coal Operators Association

included J. Smith Talley, father of the present operators of that name; Joe Martin, of the Parke County Coal Company; J. K. Siefert, Job Freeman, father of Will H. Freeman; J. S. Bogle, the Shirkle brothers, A. M. Ogle, father of Alfred M. Ogle; John A. Templeton, founder of the present Templeton mines and father of Charles N. Templeton; Jim McClellan, William Zeller Sr., David Ingle the first, the Ehrlich brothers, Robert J. Smith, father of Henry P. Smith, and many others, who made coal mining in this region an outstanding industry.

Miners have been organized in this district from an early date, and contracts between operators and the union, known as the Knights of Labor, were dated as early as 1880. The first labor contract between the Indiana Bituminous Coal Operators Association and the United Mine Workers of America was signed in 1890. The oldest agreement, still existing in the records of the operators' association, is dated 1899. Known as the "Terre Haute" agreement, it was signed by J. H. Kennedy, secretary of District No. 11, U. M. W. of America; J. W. Landrum, secretary of the operators' association; W. D. Van Horn, president of District No. 11, and J. Smith Talley, president of the operators. In the latter part of the last century, the basic daily wage rate was \$1.80.



#### Some Figures in Field.

Present officers of the association are Charles N. Templeton, president; Henry P. Smith, vice president, and Mr. Cartwright, secretary, all of Terre Haute. Directors also include David Ingle Sr., Evansville; P. L. Donie, Vincennes; William Zeller, Indianapolis, and William H. Cooke, Terre Haute.

The importance of the industry to this community is obvious from the fact that of the 5,000 men employed in the state's shaft mines, about 2,000 are employed in the Vigo county deep mines.

Member companies of the association at this time, and their directing heads are the Black Hawk Coal Corporation, Henry P. Smith, Terre Haute; Walter Bledsoe & Company (Dresser and Saxton mines), Walter A. Bledsoe, Terre Haute; Crescent Mining Company, Thomas Moore, Evansville; Dugger Domestic Coal Company, D. M. Lippéatt, Dugger; Glendora Coal Company, C. N. Templeton, Terre Haute; Ingle Coal Company, David Ingle, Evansville; Knox Consolidated Coal Corporation, W. M. Zeller, Indianapolis; Linton-Summit Coal Company, C. N. Templeton, Terre Haute; Little Betty Mining Corporation, P. L. Donie, Vincennes; Peabody Coal Company, D. H. Devonald, Chicago; Princeton Mining Company, Henry P. Smith, Terre Haute; Snow Hill Coal Corporation (Talleydale and Fayette mines), Samuel Ashby, Indianapolis, and the Templeton Coal Company, C. N. Templeton, Terre Haute.